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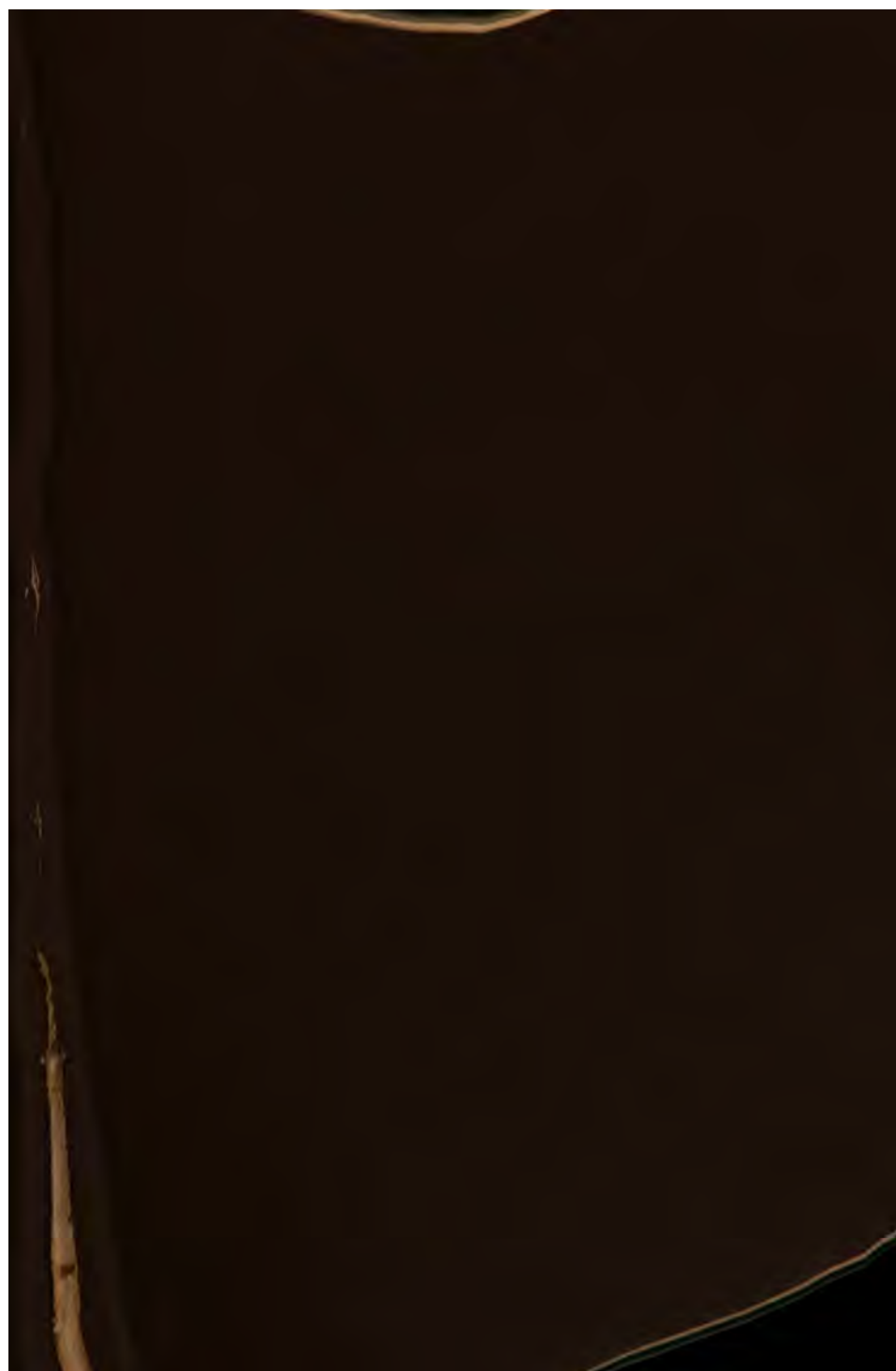
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THE  
**SOCIAL LAW OF GOD:**

SERMONS ON THE  
  
TEN COMMANDMENTS.

BY  
**E. A. WASHBURN, D.D.**  
*Late Rector of Calvary Church, New York.*

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

*Revised Edition*

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EDWARD A. WASHBURN.

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"And they buried him . . . among the kings."—2 Chron. xxiv. 16.

"YES, lay him down where sleep the royal dead.  
His steady hand no more the censer swings.  
Room for this priest beside the bones of kings !  
For kingly was he, though a priest," they said.  
Great-hearted friend, thee, too, we counted bred  
For priesthood loftier than the tardy wings  
Of souls content with songs the caged bird sings  
Are wont to soar to. Thine it was to wed  
Far-sundered thoughts in amity complete ;  
With Christ's own freedom fettered minds to free ;  
To thread the darkling paths where timid feet  
Faltered and slipped. Oh, it was not in thee  
To blanch at any peril ! Then most meet  
That thou amidst the kings should'st buried be.

W. R. H.



## IN MEMORIAM.

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EDWARD ABIEL WASHBURN was born in Boston, April 16th, 1819. A descendant of John Washburn, of Evesham, who was Secretary to the Plymouth Company, he was a member of that large and widespread family so distinguished in the varied departments of life. His father being a merchant in easy circumstances, he enjoyed all the advantages afforded by his native city ; and from the Latin School he passed to Harvard College, where he graduated with high honors in 1838. Having decided to enter the Congregational ministry, he proceeded to the Theological Seminary at Andover, where he spent one year, going the following year to New Haven, but returning to the former place to complete his third year. At this period he was distinguished for his literary tastes and acquirements, and was a great admirer of Carlyle and Coleridge ; while he also found a great stimulus to intellectual activity in the writings of his kinsman, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Among his associates and classmates were some who have since become distinguished, like Drs. Storrs and Hitchcock. He was now licensed to preach, and for six months he was occupied in filling various vacant pulpits, being everywhere well received. His acquaintance with several Church clergymen, including the then Rev. Messrs. Clark and Vinton, in con-

nection with Mr. Hall, now the Rector of Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, led the way to a fuller consideration of the constitution of the Church than he had previously given, and, as the result, it finally appeared to him that the Congregational theory could not command his assent.

Accordingly he became a candidate for Orders in the Diocese of Massachusetts, spending the period of candidacy at the South. July 12th, 1844, in Trinity Church, Boston, he was admitted to the diaconate by the Bishop of the diocese, whereupon he took charge of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport. While officiating there as deacon, and on the occasion of the death of President Jackson, he made use of one of the prayers in a way that excited inquiry among some concerning his views respecting the condition of departed souls, and when the time came for his advancement to the priesthood his bishop at first declined to give him ordination. The erroneous impression was removed, and he was set apart as a presbyter by Bishop Eastburn in Grace Church, Boston, October 9th, 1845. Mr. Washburn served as Rector of St. Paul's until 1851, with much usefulness and popularity. Those, indeed, were among the happiest years of his life. In 1851 he resigned and went abroad, for the benefit of study and travel. He was absent until 1853, in the mean while visiting Egypt, Palestine, India, and China, remaining in the latter country about six months. On his return he was called to St. John's, Hartford, to succeed Dr. Coxe, preaching his first sermon on Easter Sunday, 1853. He was married June 16th, of the same year, in Trinity Church, Washington, D.C., to Miss Frances H. Lindsley, eldest daughter of Dr. Lindsley. For a time,

in connection with his parochial work, he performed the duties of Lecturer on Ecclesiastical Polity at the Berkeley Divinity School, Middletown, Connecticut. In 1860 he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Trinity College. In 1862 he was called to the rectorship of the large and wealthy church of St. Mark's, Philadelphia. In 1865 he was elected as the successor of Dr. Coxe, at Calvary Church, New York. In 1871 he was a delegate to the Evangelical Alliance, and in 1872 he went abroad again, and visited Spain, in company with his friend, Professor C. M. Butler. In 1873 he attended the sessions of the Alliance in New York, and in 1879 he was a delegate to that body which met at Basle. During the summer of 1880 he spent two months travelling horseback in North Carolina and Virginia, returning to his clerical duties in the autumn, though suffering severely from time to time, as indeed had been the case for a great portion of his life. He officiated for the last time on the Sunday before Christmas, preaching a carefully prepared sermon, and retiring from the pulpit exhausted, though hoping to recover to do ten years more of active duty. Yet ere long this hope was abandoned, and with submission he recognized the inevitable event. Dr. Washburn passed away from earth shortly after noon, February 2d, 1881, his end proving what might have been expected of one whose life had been one long course of preparation for death. Says one of his classmates : " He fell asleep while words of prayer were ascending beside him, and while the loving and blessing hands which clasped his own were scarcely conscious that their strong pulses had been stilled."

As a writer, Dr. Washburn's efforts were somewhat scattered. In connection with his friend, the Rev. Edwin Harwood, D.D., he translated and supplemented that part of Dr. Schaff's edition of "Lange's Commentary" which is devoted to the Pastoral Epistles. Volume I. of Dr. Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom" also contains a contribution by him, giving his view of the position of the Anglican Church. He also co-operated with Dr. Schaff in the work of Biblical Revision. In 1873 he read a paper before the Evangelical Alliance on "Reason and Faith," and another before the same body in 1879 on "Socialism." He wrote many important articles for the reviews—contributing to the *International* his article on "The Conflict of Religion and Science," and to the *Princeton* one on "The Aim and Influence of Modern Biblical Criticism." His pen was frequently employed in connection with the Church press. In the Church Congress he was prominent, and he spoke strongly at its sessions on important questions, while he frequently appeared before scientific and collegiate societies. Nevertheless, he published but a single volume—"The Social Law of God"—a treatise on the Decalogue in its relation to the New Testament. In a very superior manner, this work shows the harmony between the old and the new dispensations. It has received the warmest commendation from writers in all parts of this country. In this work, while encouraging the weak with gentle, assuring words, he casts his invectives like barbed javelins at social wrongs.

In the course of more than three-score years, Dr. Washburn accomplished much, yet he left us feeling that his life-work was not done, and that he still had something to say.

Among several works in progress was one on "Ecclesiastical Polity," though at the same time he was severe in his strictures upon empty ecclesiasticism and sacerdotal assumption. He admired the primitive constitution of the Church, which he recognized as historically founded by the apostles and prophets, but he never coveted the episcopal office, though his administrative abilities were ample, and he was always able to sustain himself in any position to which he was called. A mitre would have added nothing to his fame.

It would be difficult to characterize the lamented subject of this notice in any brief words like those now at command. He has indeed been compared with a number of eminent scholars and divines, but the character of Dr. Washburn was so unique and original that all attempt at comparison must fail. He was a man in whom the moral and intellectual qualities were very largely developed, while at the same time they were perfectly balanced. His mind knew no fear, as his conscience would admit of no compromise with what was wrong. His nature, like his Christian name, was a compound of Hebrew and Saxon. He exhibited the stern morality of the one and mental peculiarities of the other. He represented what was strongest and best in both, being fitly called Abiel, the "Father of Strength." In saying that he combined the Puritan with the Churchman, we should simply repeat the thought already expressed. His mind was one of unusual range and power, and was enriched by the most generous and varied culture. His fearlessness was equalled only by his faith. It is true that, in his earlier ministry, chiefly through the mistake of the critic, he had a reputation with some for extremes in



theology and churchmanship, but in reality his mind was constantly broadening. Still, from the beginning to the end of life, his faith was deep and dominated over all. Yet, however he may have cherished the cardinal truths of Christianity, he did not fear any criticism of his faith. On the contrary, he believed that no feature of our time possessed more meaning than that of the new life which has been poured into all studies bearing on the Scriptures. He fully recognized the advance that had been made in modern biblical criticism. He viewed this revived interest as originating in something more than a general growth in letters. He traced it to the change that has led men from abstract pursuits to history and scientific studies—that is, to the source of things. The present critical tendencies, he held, were akin to those awakened by the Reformation, and he believed that the best results would be secured by biblical criticism to theological inquiry, to the interpretation of history, and to the growth of a living Christianity. In one place he says that biblical science will “increase the growth of the Christian life, which is the end of all Christian knowledge.” He declared that theology was the queen of the sciences, and that its ultimate reconciliation with other science was certain. Hence the freedom and the boldness of his investigations, and his readiness to have all things tested. In speaking more exactly of the results already achieved by criticism, he says : “The divinity of Christ, His redeeming sacrifice, His gift of the Comforter, are no longer theories.”

As regards the Scriptures, he thought that the belief in mechanical dictation or verbal infallibility was the natural

product of the old mystical methods of interpretation. This method he heartily condemned, even when he recognized it in the school of Simeon, which, according to his view, declaims against ritualism, but follows symbolism in the interpretation of the New Testament. He was opposed to that system which builds a "fanciful Christology out of any plain Psalm of David, or any rite of temple worship." He believed that Revelation obeyed the order of intellectual and moral growth. He taught that the study of God's Word was needed for its defence against "idols of the theological cave;" and, in speaking of dogma, he refused to accept what he styled "the empiric doctrinal system of one age or sect for the Catholic truth."

In treating the subject of our ecclesiastical system, he complained that a school of thinkers reasoned from its assumption of the need of a succession to the fact; while he thought it was argument enough for the episcopate, that we could trace it in the normal growth of the early diocesan Church. In this connection, sometimes, as in others, he nevertheless pushed his thought to the extreme; as, for instance, when, on the platform of the Church Congress, he represented one class of Anglicans as floating amid the waves of European thought upon a cake of ice, and calling Christianity to throw its anchor to them. By the intelligent audiences that he always commanded, however, he was seldom misunderstood, even when, in denouncing pernicious literature, as in the present volume, he pronounces in favor of making a pyre of bad books and burning their authors on the top of the pile. Still his capacious and far-reaching mind loved to revel in all gentle and loving moods. If he

knew how to condemn evil, he was equally swift to recognize and commend the good.

In philosophy Dr. Washburn entertained pronounced views, even on abstruse points. He held with Rocelin and the Nominalists, that general conceptions or universals were not real, and he sympathized with Berkeley.

Dr. Washburn's linguistic accomplishments threw wide open the gates of knowledge, and made the world's scholarship available. Accordingly all his utterances are characterized by a singular fulness of information. At the same time he was not pedantic. His rich stores of learning were amassed solely for use, and together with cant he heartily abhorred all ostentation. His style was always vigorous and clear, and often remarkably strong. Indeed, strength and solidity characterized every performance.

Dr. Washburn's mind was eclectic. He had seen much of the world. He was familiar with the cradle of the old religions. He had studied the elder civilizations in the lands where they took their rise. He had mingled freely with the races who gave to the world the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, and the Koran. He knew their literatures and philosophies. He was, therefore, prepared to accept whatever was good. He also knew the place occupied by the Christian religion in its relation to the Semitic and Aryan faiths. He comprehended their respective claims upon the intellect. He knew the immeasurable inferiority of the "Light of Asia" to the "Light of the World," and without qualification gave his allegiance and faith to the Nazarene.

Though known chiefly as a scientific and critical theologian, he delighted to linger in the by-ways of elegant literature.

His studies in the Old English were extensive and exact. He also cultivated poetry. Indeed, he wrote verses of no mean order, as may be seen by his poem on Mazzini, a man whom he sincerely admired. In depicting certain phases of the Italian reformer's character, he well nigh describes himself. Dr. Washburn added to many other characteristics that of the philanthropist. His work in the city of New York is well known ; but, to appreciate his deepest feeling in this connection, one should have seen him on a pleasant summer day, sitting under the gnarled apple-trees in the fragrant orchards of St. Johnland, discoursing with loving appreciation on the plans of his friend Dr. Muhlenberg for the realization of a model industrial community and Christian home. In such a connection, as he warmed with the subject, he showed the intrinsic goodness of his heart.

• • • Dr. Washburn was a man of rare frankness and perfect sincerity. He never stooped to flattery. He possessed social qualities of a high order, and his nature was tender and deeply affectionate. Though at times, when suffering keenly from disease, his manner may have appeared positive and abrupt, at heart he was nevertheless as gentle as a little child. He was faithful in his loves and friendships when he found that they were correctly bestowed ; while in this respect his rare insight seldom allowed him to go astray. From his youth he was distinguished for the purity of his mind and the quickness of his moral apprehension. Indeed in all respects there was a remarkable unity between his early and later years. He instinctively shrank from everything that was mean and sordid, but took in by natural assimilation every noble and disinterested

thought. Upon the announcement of his decease, men of all schools of churchmanship felt that a master in Israel had fallen. Beyond question he stood in the front rank of the clergy of our day with respect to learning, eloquence, and power. In the language of one who knew him well, we may say : " For a true and lofty manhood ; for talent consecrated by religion and enriched with varied culture ; for intellectual greatness wedded to spiritual power, and ripened into fruits of mellowing wisdom and grace as age drew on ; for a ministry of honest convictions, of outspoken sentiments, of bold defences and advocacies of what he held to be true, of manly acknowledgments of error when made, of rare impressibleness to words of argument that were opposed to his own, if candidly and fairly urged—in fine, for a mind well-freighted, many-sided, far-reaching, expansive in sympathy, fully alive to the demands of a day of progress, and yet in danger from the divorce of religion and learning, Dr. Washburn was remarkable."

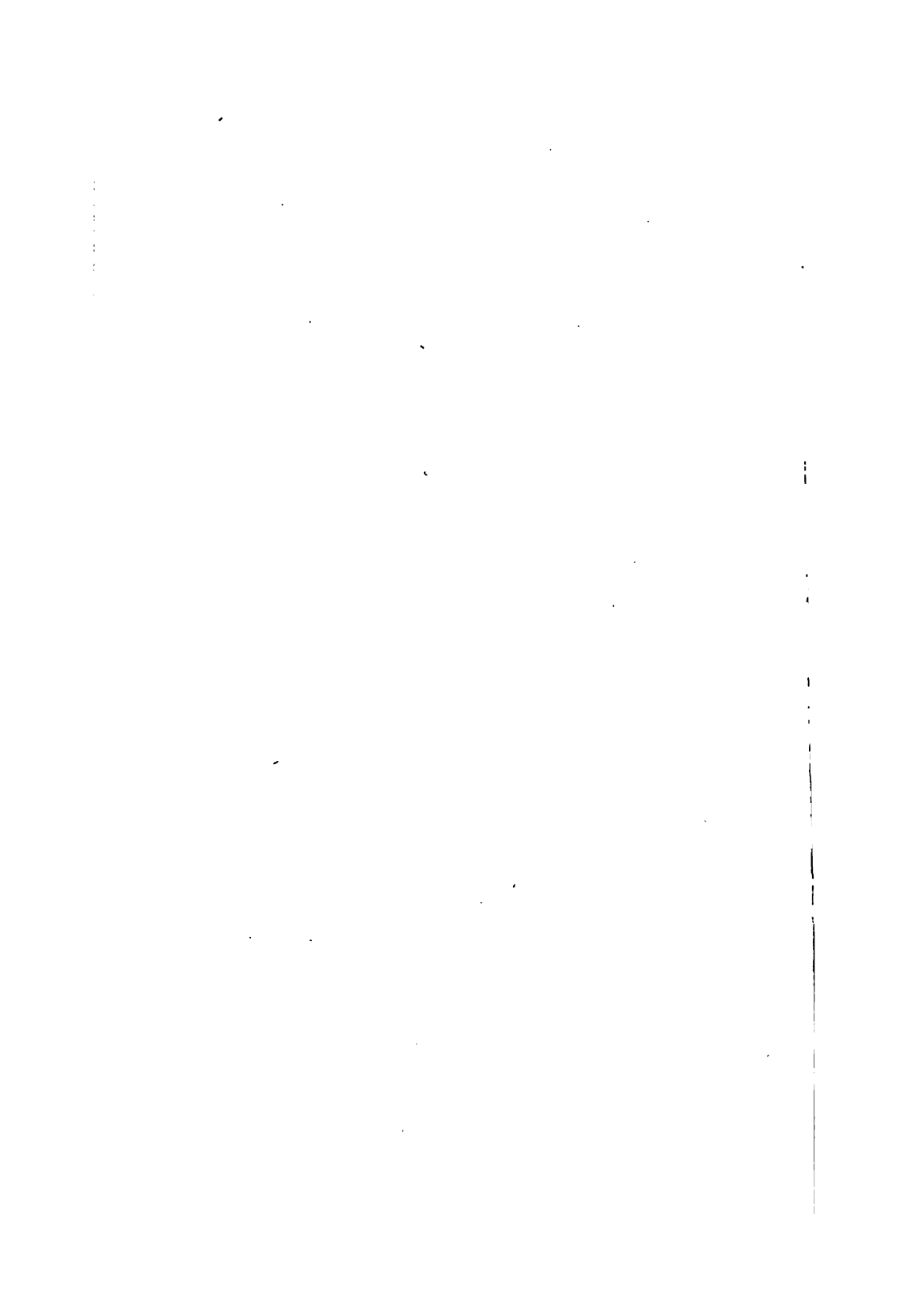
B. F. D. *Beveta.*

## PREFACE.

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THESE Sermons are offered with love and gratitude to the members of Calvary Church, by whose wish they are published. I need only say to other readers, that I have long thought it the pressing need of our time, to know the unity of Christian faith with the simplest laws of Christian ethics ; and in that conviction I commend these pages.

E. A. W.



# Sermons

ON THE

## TEN COMMANDMENTS.

---

### THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

*"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God."*—EXOD. XX. 1. 2.

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*—ST. MATT. XXII. 37, 38, 39. 40.

I INVITE you, Christian friends, at this season of Lent, when we remember our sins and Him who is our sinless sacrifice, to a study of the ancient Law of God. In whatever light we read the record, it is no dead memorial of the past. The Hebrew state, its temple, and the glory of its worship have faded away; yet it lives al-



ways in the history of the race, beyond even the nations foremost in letters, art, or polity, as the keeper of the faith in one God, in a pure morality; and therefore this law speaks to us to-day with the same unchanged voice as from the peak of Sinai. Yet it is not as Hebrews we receive it, but as disciples of a greater than Moses, Who alone can teach us its spirit. I have often felt it to be one of the many happy changes of our American Liturgy, that it has added to the words of the Decalogue its divine interpretation from the lips of our Lord: and in this harmony I would read the statute-book. It is that law, in its relation to our Christian duties, which concerns us; and if there be a truth that needs to be preached in a time when our Christianity has become too often a theological opinion, or a ritual for the fancy, it is that the Gospel is a law in its noblest sense; a law that rebukes the real sins of the household, the church, the social life, and demands of us a real righteousness; a law as rigid as the tables of stone, yet large as the mind of Christ.

But before entering on the several commandments of the code, I must give you a general view of its character as a polity for the Hebrew people, and its true authority for us as Christian believers.

We approach this wonderful book of Israel, my brethren, with a reverence deeper than we yield to any relic of secular or sacred history before Christ. Modern learning has modified, in many respects, our view of the Pentateuch ; but whatever may be the date of any other portion, the essential fact is clearly proved that these laws, the corner-stone of the early commonwealth, must have been of the time and work of the great lawgiver. No later age had the moral power to invent, and no later age could have arisen without them. Their primitive form of language ; that structure found only in such codes of a childlike people, where the religion, the civic and the social morality are blended together ; that simple, brief, positive utterance, all are marks, as sure as the rude stone tables, that they were graven on the young life of the nation. There is nothing in them of the after-time of the judges, or the kings, still less of the period when the restored law had passed from a commonwealth into a priestly state. We open this code of a people who, at the time they received it, were a race of nomads, for years serfs of Egypt, without the wisdom or social growth of any of the grand empires of the East, and we find a pure fabric of religious and moral truth.

My purpose is not here to say anything of that body of Levitical statutes given in the early records. In the view I have taken, the criticism which undervalues the Hebrew religion on this account does not touch its essential character. It is enough that in its childlike features it was fitted to the needs of a childlike people. But that very fact strengthens our whole argument, when we turn from the ritual to this moral code, which towers above it as Sinai in its calm, unshared grandeur above the lower ranges of the desert.

Let us now study its structure. It is divided into two tables, of which the former gives our duty to God, and the latter our duty to men. There is much force in the suggestion of some eminent scholars that in the original writing there were probably five statutes on one, and five on the other rocky tablet. But the inspiring truth of the whole, in which we read already the heart of each letter, is that its moral precepts are drawn from the fountain-head of religious faith. We have, first of all, the sublime revelation of one personal God ; His spiritual nature and worship ; the reverence of His name ; the hallowing of a special time for His service. We have next the laws of social life, that begin with the household, the cradle of all duties, and pass

to the widening relations of property, life, chastity, reputation ; and as the last note of the moral harmony breathing through these statutes, the law of unselfish love toward our fellow-men. Each of these is uttered in the plainest speech. These ten "words," as the Commandments are called in the Hebrew tongue, are indeed words of God ; they speak with the positive voice of duty—"thou shalt," or, "thou shalt not." There is contained in this short summary the outline of all treatises on morality and all codes of justice. Not the least blemish of any vicious or barbarous legislation is mingled with them ; nor is there any feature of local law, unless it be in the statute of the seventh day, and that we shall hereafter show to be in its spirit worthy of this high-rank. The form is Hebrew, national ; but the truth is as broad as human life, and fitted to the wants of a race. If we compare this code with the remains of other ancient peoples, with the code of Menu, the sacred books of China, the fragments of the Persian religion, there is nothing like it. Much indeed of rich moral truth may be found in these Eastern books, amidst a medley of superstitious fable, and too often of cruel social enactments ; but in no one of them is the moral law distinctly placed on its own

supreme seat above all else, as with the Hebrew revelation. If we compare it with the ideal laws of Plato in the noblest age of Greece, it passes beyond them not only in its faith in one God, but in its whole character; for while Athens never could realize the dream of its sage, this—wondrous fact!—is the code of a primitive people, practical, living, speaking in their mother-tongue, entering into their daily, common duties, into the temple, the household, the neighborly circle, the farm, and the merchandise.

Here, then, we complete our sketch, which, brief as it is, will give you the guiding line of our argument. We look at the history of that Hebrew people; and we know that from first to last this law was the well-head of all their virtues; it created a divine republic; it created their judges, their heroes, and their prophets; it survived in its grandeur, until a later Rabbinism had overlaid it with its glosses, and uplifted the ritual above the moral life; yet it has not died, for its spirit has only passed into Christian legislation and Christian life. We acknowledge the mighty debt which Europe owed to the system of Roman law. The genius of the empire survived, after it was broken, in that wonderful code, and has aided in the structure of mo-

dern society. Yet all that Roman and Christian learning have done is but the filling of this divine outline ; all that civilization has wrought for social good, for the marriage bond, for the ties of the family, for chastity, for honesty, for the safeguard of human life, for the right of property, the right of a good name, for the training of the man, the neighbor, the citizen, is but the ripe growth of this ancient book, written in the morning of the world, which has entered into the conscience, the history of mankind. Such is the law of Israel, and in this knowledge of its truth we hallow it as the priceless gift of the past. Were it regarded as only a monument of human wisdom, it would claim the homage of every intellect ; but that very admission **compels a deeper reverence.** We ask, whence could come such a system as this ? whence a morality so pure, so perfect among this infant people, so fitted to every time, so unchanged in the lapse of ages, so universal in its sway over the conscience of mankind ? It has but one answer. It has on it the seal of its divine Author.

And now, my friends, if we have learned the ground-plan of the Hebrew building, we may turn to a "greater than the temple." What is the relation of the Gospel to the Law ? It is a

weighty question, for on either hand we see the champions of tradition or lawless freedom ; and it is my wish to give each whole-minded reader of the New Testament a clear principle. There is a historic unity that binds the religion of Christ to the ancient faith whence it sprang. All the truth of that elder covenant, its law, its psalm, its prophecy, are our heritage ; all are parts in the one, manifold record. Yet while it thus claims our reverence, Christianity is not a Mosaism continued, but a Mosaism fulfilled. The Hebrew religion was national ; the Christian is Catholic. The Hebrew religion was for the childhood of a people. The Christian is for the manhood of our growth. We do not thereby infer that it has naught to do with an outward law or worship, but we are to look at Judaism from the higher point of a Christian Gospel, not at the Gospel from the lower point of Judaism. Our Lord has expressed the whole truth in His sum of the commandments. It is a striking fact, which some do not know and few deeply consider, that the two sublime sentences touching the love of God and of our neighbor are not in His own language, but are both cited from the words of the Old Testament itself. The Jew read that spiritual precept, but it was hid from his

eyes by his incapacity for its deeper teaching. Judaism held in its passing form the perfect truth of Christianity, as the plant through all its living processes from stem to leaf and blossom has its only purpose in the fruit. This law of transition through decay to the new life is God's fulfilling alike in nature or in history. As we turn to the record of the ancient people, we see this preparatory character stamped on its ritual, its law, its priesthood, its social usages, its literature, its men. But as we look at the New Testament, we have the lineaments of a faith, a polity, which were to stretch beyond its first dawn to the whole future of a Church and a social civilization. It does not give us the exact form of worship, but the large, flexible principles fitted to the growth of every growing time ; it has no minute system of law, but it teaches what is the life of all law : it seeks to plant the quickening seed of faith and love in the renewed heart ; to utter the broad precepts of reverence, justice, temperance, brotherly kindness, charity, to build the character of the man of God in the likeness of his Divine Master.

In that light, therefore, we know how the Gospel of Christ fulfilled the ancient code of Israel. Whatever was purely national, or fitted to an earlier day of religious growth, ceased to be binding



on the Christian freeman. Temple service, priesthood and sacrifice, circumcision, ritual washings and fastings, the distinction of clean or unclean meats, new moons, and Sabbath<sup>s</sup>, were no longer a divine commandment. There was not indeed any instant abolition of these, but they were left to drop away by gradual disuse, save in marked cases, like that of circumcision, where the strife compelled legislation. The Church might borrow, as it did from the hallowed uses of the synagogue, its office of presbyter or its mode of service. But the principle is a clear and necessary one. There was no binding authority in any such Hebrew law, laid on the neck of the Christian. It cannot be denied without denying the whole evidence of the New Testament ; it is the pith and marrow of St. Paul's great epistles. Let this idea be fully grasped. If the Pauline doctrine mean anything, it means that the whole theory of interpretation, which finds in the visible structure of the Hebrew religion, its temple, priesthood, altar sacrifice in any sense a divine archetype to be continued in Christian worship, is a fanciful absurdity. Yet it is too often called Church teaching. It has been even affirmed by some grave doctors of the Christian law, that the Hebrew ritual has authority, unless expressly

abrogated. But it would be well, if such later Rabbis saw the just logic of the theory. We may as well say that we should wear no "garment of mingled linen and woolen," as that the Christian ministry is the copy of a sacrificing priesthood, for it rests on the self-same authority. Such a view not only destroys the spiritual life of the Gospel, but the whole principle of its connection with the past. It reads Christianity backward, as we read the page of the Hebrew Bible. It is this gross literalism which robs the Holy Word of its grand historic meaning, and turns it into a book of sacred riddles, in which men hunt with the same microscopic ingenuity as the Talmudist, for an occult sense under every vestment or utensil of Levitical worship. But if we have grasped the living principle, we have indeed found the unchanging ground of that revelation. The faith in the one God, the fact of man's nature, his sin, his long education under a divine wisdom, the promise of a Christ, and the nobler kingdom of a redeemed race, all these make it indeed one progressive, harmonious history. In this spirit we are to study that noblest monument of the Hebrew religion, the moral law. That law, as we have seen, stands above the ritual in those truths of God, of spiritual worship, of social duty, which

are written on the tables of the conscience, and therefore can never pass away. Yet it is the divine Lord who alone lends us the light to read in every precept a deeper meaning than it had for the Hebrew mind. It is not for us only a Jewish Decalogue, in the specific form in which it was given of old time ; but we see there the grand outlines of duty to God and man, which we interpret by the supreme law of Christ, on which hang all the law and the prophets. The Gospel puts the soul into the body. The Hebrew law says : "Worship one God : " the Christian says : "God is love, and he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." The Hebrew law says : "Kill not ;" the Christian says : "If a man hate his brother, he is a murderer." The Hebrew law says : "Thou shalt not steal ;" the Christian says : "Let him labor, that he may give to him that needeth." The Hebrew law says : "Thou shalt not commit adultery ;" the Christian says : "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ?" Wherever you turn throughout the pages of the New Testament, you see how the moral standard rises alike in its knowledge of the heart, in its nobleness of motive, and in its larger demands above the former letter. It is that letter, bright with the mind of Christ, warm

with His love, who would make us pure as He is pure.

Here then, as we know in what the harmony of law and Gospel consists, we have the ethical principle, which lifts us above the two opposing errors that divide, and in dividing, destroy it. There is one tendency to identify the divine, unchanging truth of the Revelation with its passing form ; there is another to lose the form and the truth also. Both are seen throughout Christian history ; both are seen to-day. You find in the former the root of all false tradition ; and it is against that error I beg you to learn the spirit of the New Testament. Turn to those doctors of the law in our Lord's time, whom He portrays in His sermon on the mount, and you have the very image of the debased nation wedded to its dead past, self-conceited, keeping with devout reverence the same Decalogue, but so hidden under the mummy clothes of a Pharisaic ingenuity, that none could know its living sense. Read the Epistles of St. Paul, and grasp their plain sense apart from the theological wrappings so often covering them, and you will learn that it was the same battle which he fought through his life-time ; it was a real righteousness, growing from a personal faith in Christ and

a heartfelt love, he opposed to the mock-righteousness of an obedience without its moral principle. That Jewish vice is of no one age or people ; it is always and everywhere ; it is rooted in human nature and found in every shape. You see it in the church of the first age after the Apostles, in the fancy that sought in the Christian ministry a copy of the priesthood of Aaron , in Christian worship a temple rite, and in the Lord's Supper an altar sacrifice ; you see the tares, sown in the green wheat, bloom in the ripe vices of the Latin communion. Read carefully each step of the history, that you may know the same error in modern disguise, and not mistake its principle. Christianity has its creeds, its just authority of law. There is nothing wise or good in the institutions of the past, which we do not reverence. But this reverence must be based on the living faith in Christ, the sound intelligence which can distinguish between his essential truth and the secondary growths of the church. If we find the law of the "one body" in a Nicene type or any other, if we substitute the authority of councils, or bishops, or doctors for Him, who is "yesterday, to-day and forever ;" if we put on the costume of a dead age, and call it a revival of faith ; if we turn the religion of the New Testament into

a stereotype copy of the past, our worship will make us devout children, rigid, ascetic, under the bondage of a law of fear, not free, willing, heart-felt men of God. May the spirit of wisdom keep us from the root which bears the fruit !

But I am equally concerned to show that this Gospel of Christ, while it gives us a more spiritual motive, gives also a more authoritative law. I turn to the great Apostle, and I learn from him its principle. "The law," he says, "is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless." We recognize that deep truth in human justice. All obedience is from a higher motive in the wise and good man, than in those who obey because they fear the tribunal or the jail. This self-governed character makes him recognize the need of social rule for himself and others ; and his homage is that of a free, willing heart. Such, in a yet truer sense, is the obedience of the Christian, and such is the law he obeys. The "Gospel of the kingdom" is to him no formless thing. We prize the ministry of Christ for its real gifts of learning and piety ; the sacraments of Christ, as blessed aids for our growth in personal holiness ; this fair worship, its psalms and prayers, because it links us in union with our dear Lord and His Church. And what, again, is the spirit of the Gospel as a

social law? It shapes the character fitted to every duty, the good neighbor, the good citizen, the upright man of business, the lover of his fellow-men. There can be no faith or holiness without its fruit in real virtues. As far as a formal righteousness from the heart of Christ, so far that hollow piety, which brings reproach upon the freedom of his Gospel! You have read, perhaps, of those wild sects, that grew as weeds in the garden of the Reformation, and gave rise to the name of Antinomian; men who held the elect absolved from all law, and even in some cases reached the blasphemy that adultery or any other sin was nothing to the renewed heart. Yet, strange as it may seem, it was only the excess of a falsehood that may lurk in more subtle disguises. It comes from a theology that has petrified the living religion of the New Testament into a system of mental abstractions, and withered the moral sense of duty, until men hardly knew whether the Gospel faith, preached from the Christian pulpit, had aught to do with honesty, or justice, or brotherly love. But let us not be deceived. What is that faith that talks of the grace of Christ and divorces this sacred truth from its moral meaning? or what the volcanic piety,

that spends itself, like Hecla, in jets of hot water, and a whirlwind of ashes ? or that mystical piety again, which feeds its own hidden emotions, and has no healthy action ? Or what that spirituality, which scorns all outward law as needless ? It is not the religion of the New Testament. If in any wise we forget its plain commandments ; if by any subtle theory, by any notional Gospel we lose sight of our practical duty ; if our piety does not make us better husbands, fathers, neighbors ; does not beget a nobler integrity, a more scrupulous honor, a heartier benevolence, a deeper reverence, a man of God in all good works, its root is rottenness and its blossom shall go up as dust. If we be servants of Christ, we must try our religion by His own rule, and that is by its fruit.

I have so endeavored, Christian friends, to show you the true spirit in which we shall study together this Statute Book of Israel. May He who is " Truth and Life," guide us in this study ! Each sentence, illuminated by the light of Christ's wisdom, shall be full of deeper, broader meanings than are found on its surface ; and it may seem to some as if it had been hitherto only a Hebrew tongue, sacred yet dead to us. We



shall see no longer the sins that walked in Jerusalem, but the sins that to-day wear as large phylacteries, and sound the trumpet in our streets. This is the moral history that concerns us. This is the lesson we need to learn of the vices of our hearts, and of our Christian time ; the knowledge that befits the disciples of our Divine Master. What is it, my hearers, to be under such a law ? Again, as I turn to that stately monument of a Hebrew past, there rises before me the mount of Sinai, and I behold the law-giver, veiled in the light of God's presence, descending with the tables of stone in his hand, and speaking to the awe-struck crowd the words of blessing and of cursing. But when I stand before that mount of Beatitudes, not burning with fire, but a lower slope, gently reaching down like the love of God to man, I see another face, diviner than that of Moses ; I know there "how awful goodness is ;" I hear in that voice, which says, "Blessed are the pure of heart," a word mightier than the thunders of the Jewish law-giver ; a law that speaks from heaven, yet quickens, cheers, uplifts us ; a law sharper than a two-edged sword to pierce the motives, to unveil the secret sins ; yet it aids us in every true

aim, it warns us in every temptation, it smiles on us in every struggle, it leads us, weak and sinful as we are, toward that life of holiness which is the gate of the life eternal.

## I.

## THE UNITY OF GOD

*God spake these words and said : I am the Lord thy God ,  
thou shalt have no other gods but me.—EXOD. XX. 3.*

*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.—ST. MATT. vi. 24.*

THE law of Israel begins with this first truth of the one personal Lawgiver. It comes from God ; it bears the image and superscription of its Author. We behold here the feature which gives this code its place above many of our brilliant social systems, that it declares the unity of morality and a living belief. We repeat to-day to those who admit the sublime precepts of Revelation, but deny its divinity, the answer which the Jewish historian made to the revilers of his faith, that "other legislators made religion a part of virtue, but Moses made all virtues part of religion." Christianity does not sever the sun from his beams. It rejects alike the empty theology that forgets a real holiness, and the morality that does not acknowledge Him, who is its purest source.

I shall, then, Christian friends, in our study of this commandment, speak first of the fact which stands forth in such wonderful light from the page of Revelation, the belief in the unity of God. It is the witness of all the past before the coming of Christ, that without a single exception, save of this Hebrew race, polytheism was the faith of mankind. We can know little indeed of the origin of early religion. Yet we cannot accept the notion of our modern sages, who have sought to show from the study of a few debased tribes, that no idea of God is to be found in the primitive races. We know from the ripest scholars in the science of comparative mythology, that amidst all the remains of heathen superstition there is the clear recognition of a divine Power ; and we should rejoice as Christian believers in such a witness of the human conscience to this sacred truth. It is the unquenched instinct of a being, born in the image of God. I shall not here dwell on that further, long-disputed question, whether a belief in many gods was the earliest religion of child-like men, or monotheism the original faith, and idolatry its degradation. We turn to the history of the Pagan error and study the process of its growth. It seems to have begun everywhere

with the adoration of the powers of nature, with the dim conception that could not rise to the truth of a personal Being, but knew Him only as a soul of the world diffused through material things. Light was the first, grandest of creations, which man mistook for the Creator. The Chaldean on his broad plains saw in the rising orb the burning eye of God ; and as far back as we can trace in the history of the East, we find the worship of the sun with the host of heaven. The poem of Job, so full of curious wisdom, gives us the very picture of the Pagan fancy :

“If I behold the sun, or the moon walking in her brightness ;  
And my heart is enticed, and I have uttered a prayer,  
Or my mouth hath kissed my hand.”

That first form of fantastic religion rose, in the later mythology, to a clearer notion of personal, intelligent deities, who presided over star, river, tree, and the life of men ; yet it never reached the truth of one Maker and Ruler of the world. There were wise men before Plato, who had purer ideas ; but it was at best an abstract wisdom, which did not touch the heart of the people. Natural religion at last had its ripest bloom, when it conceived of its gods as ideal men ; but with this began its deeper corruption. Polytheism is the deifying of the manifold passions. We

see in every form of the Pagan mythology the image of those among whom it rose ; in the dreamy pantheism of India the fancy and sensual lust of that people ; in the gods of the north, who spent life in drinking or battle, the wild barbarian himself ; and in the divinities of Greece the personifying of Greek life, their Zeus a royal adulterer and their Aphrodite the queen of wanton love. We do not forget even amidst these errors the noble truth, that could not die out of the conscience ; but everywhere we trace the struggles of our human nature, its deep sense of the mystery of sin, the battle of light and darkness, and even in the longing after a personal God the hope of one, who should redeem our humanity. It is our Christian faith, that bids us believe with the noblest of the Fathers in the " Light which lighteth every man," and educated the mind through that long twilight for the perfect day. Yet all the wisdom of the past, and all the charm of those " fair humanities " that gleam through the poetry of classic times, must not hide from us this fact, that the religion of nature could not rise above its source, but while the world passed to its highest perfection in art or science, it sank deeper in moral degradation.

And now we consider the one solitary example

of ancient history. This rude nation of Israel held a belief in one personal, living, self-existent Jehovah, the Maker of the world. It appears from the day of Abraham ; it appears in a more express revelation in the Law of Moses ; it is the acknowledged faith of the people ; it is made the corner-stone of their religion, their commonwealth ; and henceforth this wonderful truth severs them from all the races and empires of the past. Such is the strange problem. What shall explain it ? Whence could they draw such a truth ? Every ingenious guess of the learning, that denies Revelation, has sought to escape it in vain. Was it the discovery of Moses ? If so, we have as hard a riddle ; for it is to suppose the early lawgiver wiser than the wisest of more civilized times. Did he have it from the priests of Egypt ? No trace is found among them, save of a doctrine of Pantheism ; and had it been so, how comes it that the Egyptian people, so far beyond the rude Israelite, never knew a faith like his, but were the worshippers of bull and crocodile ? But of late we have had from our critics, who find the key to history in the doctrine of race, the confident statement that this Semitic people was distinguished from the Aryan stock, whether Hindu or Persian, by a sterner mono-

theistic faith. Yet the record only proves the contrary. There were other great branches of the Semitic family, yet all were worshippers of the gods of light. It has been said, again, that we find in the Old Testament clear historic traces of the early idolatry of the Hebrews themselves ; and that it is probable, while they cast out the gods of the nations, they had no other idea of their own Deity than as the Mighty One, greater than all others. Undoubtedly, we know from their sacred books that their fathers, Terah and Nachor, "on the other side of the flood," were idolaters before the day of Abraham. The record of the Genesis proves their rude conception of a spiritual being, and their temptation to fall back into the sensual worship around them. Even under the shadow of Sinai they could choose the golden calf. But what is this, save the best witness that such a truth could never have sprung from the mind of this half-taught race? We cannot escape the evidence that this faith in the one living God did become in the purest sense the ruling law of the people. That sublime scene at Horeb gives us undoubtedly the point of time when it was uttered in its most sacred form ; and the language of man has never conveyed it in more simple and awful majesty than in the de-



claration, "*I am in that I am*," the self-existent Being. It would seem, indeed, as if only the most unreasonable effort to deny the possibility of a revelation could make any shut his eyes to such gathered proof. We accept it with reverence. It remains alone in the religious history of the world, while the mind of man, with its vast discoveries in pure thought, its growth in art or letters, feebly groped its way toward the truth ; while even to-day our vaunted science finds nothing but a natural force, and tells us that a Maker, a Providence are unknown names which we cannot speak, it remains the plain fact that in the twilight of the past the doctrine of the one God was declared aloud, and from that time has been the inheritance of the race.

But the knowledge of so striking a truth leads us, my friends, to the view on which I wish specially to dwell in our exposition of the divine Law. If it had been only the utterance of this highest of doctrines, it would have been enough, indeed, to place the Book of Israel above all books of wisdom. But it is far more than this. There is no likeness, as has well been said by Coleridge, between this and any idea of monotheism such as science draws from the study of nature ; no abstract notion of unity,

such as the Unitarian holds; but it was the simplest faith of a people in a personal, living God, Maker, King, Lawgiver, and Judge. I know no stranger misconception of the Hebrew religion than that given by a late writer on "Literature and Dogma," who has claimed for the Hebrew an intense faith in a law of righteousness guiding the world, yet denied him any idea of the personality of God. This is to ignore the truth of history. Such a rude nation never could grasp an abstract idea of morality. Their moral conception was linked with the Divine Person. He was the God of justice and of holiness. That belief placed them in stern contrast with the heathen worshipper of nature, of light, and animal life. The secret of their marvellous history, their freedom, their social purity, their isolation, yet their unmatched influence on the races about them and the race of man was in this alone. All their statutes, public or private, were the utterance of this principle. The unity of God meant the unity of His law, the unity of the national conscience. We read here the whole meaning of the ancient religion which our critics have found so hard to understand; we know why a people so small, so rude when compared with the mighty

empires of the East, holds a nobler place than all as keeper of such a truth for mankind. This was their divine calling. It was reserved for an Egypt to build a stately civilization, and for Greece to teach the world in art and letters ; but it was God's wisdom thus to choose the least of the nations, that, amidst the growing superstitions and vices of the world, a pure faith should be guarded for the time to come. In that light we understand the structure of the Hebrew polity. It rested on this great truth. Wherever we turn to the page of the Old Testament, we see this moral significance. As long as they felt that the unseen "God was their King," as long as they believed in an Almighty and All Holy, who swayed the affairs of men, they kept their free commonwealth and their social virtue ; but as the reality of a divine law faded out of the national conscience, they dropped again and again into the idolatry of their neighbors. Indeed, I know no more striking proof of the revelation of such a truth than is seen in their own froward infidelity to it. Their history is a ceaseless oscillation between the Baalim of the groves, and the God of their fathers. Idolatry and adultery are synonyms in the language of the deep-hearted prophets. Luxury, despotism,

impurity, went hand in hand with apostasy.

Here, then, my friends, I reach the point where I may present the primeval law of Moses, as it speaks to us with all its Christian power. We accept this sublime truth of the unity of God, as the corner-stone of our religious faith. But this belief is not for us, more than for those early believers, an abstract doctrine. This it is the ancient Revelation teaches us, that it must be a living fact, written on the individual and social conscience; the acknowledgment of a personal Lawgiver, whose unseen spiritual law rules our own human life. But we have a truth deeper than the Hebrew mind could grasp, in the Gospel of Him who is the Incarnate Son of God, the full revelation of holiness and love and grace. The essence of that truth lies in the moral relationship it declares, because it makes us sons of God, and believers in His law of holiness. If our faith in the God and Father of the Christian revelation be not this, it matters little whether we prove a Deity after the fashion of a Paley, or resolve him into a world-gas, for our belief is but a theory, which has no power over the real man. You are perhaps astonished at so bold an expression, but I am not trifling here with words. I turn to that

sentence of our Lord, which I have set beside the law of Israel as its commentary. What does he mean when he tells us, that "none can serve God and Mammon?" The Mammon of which he speaks was not the poor outward idol of old time, but the Mammon of the heart. We believe in one God. And what, then, is such a faith? Is it the acceptance of a mental proposition that makes the difference between Christian and Pagan? We believe in one God: the devils also believe and tremble. I affirm it the fundamental law of Christian ethics, which I wish to enforce in all its height and breadth, that the religion of the New Testament is not a system of speculative ideas, but a truth seated in the conscience, the affections. If the dogma be not one with the life; if it have no efficacy over the real character of men, we may have a Christian Polytheism. I do not wish to push the thought into paradox; but I mean all that our Lord has said, that the moral root of Polytheism is in the deifying of our own human passions. We may hold, or we may deny, the existence of a Trinity as an article of faith; but we really worship what our affections worship. The conception which every mind has of the character of God is the reflex of its own moral character. The atheist rejects Him, because

he wants no such being; and the superstitious man, on the other hand, always paints Him to his fancy in some gloomy features that hide His real attributes. Our Christianity may be thus in its inward heart as well as its influence transformed into a religion of many gods. Be not deceived with words, but look at realities. Where is the difference, if we be worshippers of sensual pleasure, whether we carve it in the statue of a Venus, of a god of drunkenness, or not? Where is the difference between him who kneels at the shrine of Plutus, and him whose money is his true deity, while he professes Christ? It is a well-known tradition, that the antique figure of St. Peter in the great Christian temple at Rome, whose foot is worn with the kisses of the reverent crowd, was once the Jupiter of an earlier temple. How many of our Christian vices are but a poorly-disguised heathenism?

Such is the principle I ask you to weigh well, my friends, as it takes us out of the whole range of subtle speculation into the meaning of a real Christianity. Let us study it, as we have studied that history of a Hebrew people. Apply it in this view to our social life, as you see it around you in this time of growing luxury. It may well startle you to note the likeness in many points

between the sensual refinement of a Paris or New York, and that of an Athens or a Rome in their day of pride ; the Pagan elements of our civilization, that reappear in new costume. We have not the gladiators, and our oaths are not in the name of heathen gods. But note the style of our modern epicurism ; the decay of Christian ideas and habits ; the growth of a large class who scorn the sanctity of the marriage bond ; the licentiousness that has its tacit recognition by the social code ; the widening barriers between rich and poor, in spite of our humanity ; and you may almost think the 'religion a superficial distinction, and the standard of morals the same. Apply it to our world of business. When the traveller visits that land which gave classic art to all after-time, he seeks first the Acropolis, where stands the most perfect of temples, whose broken columns still image to us the bloom of a Greek religion. Imagine, then, some wise man of Athens, revisiting our world to see the growth of so many ages ; suppose him entering the chief city of our land, and with the feeling that leads us to the Parthenon, asking his way to the greatest of Christian temples. At the head of the busiest street, where the waves of traffic ebb and flow, he pauses before a pile, whose cross points

heavenward, and whose open gates invite the worshipper ; it is Lent, the time of special humiliation ; he crosses the threshold ; he gazes on altar and carved pillars, but only a few are there, and the prayer wanders over empty aisles ; he retreats, saying, "It is the house of some lesser god." But as he walks down the crowded way, he stands before another pile, up whose steps crowds throng with earnest look, all jostling each other, all talking with busy tongues ; he cannot understand the dialect, but he sees the devotion ; he hears the voice of the chief priests, and the responses of the worshippers ; he gazes with delight, and says, "This is without a doubt the temple of the supreme God." And if the heathen sage should so mistake the exchange for the temple, he would only apply to us the rule we apply to him ; he would only mistake the name, the worship he would fully understand. Pardon me if I seem to single a special example. I honor the Christian merchant as truly as the Christian in any calling ; but it is the fever of a mercenary life, which eats at the heart of society on every side, that I deplore. The Chinese have three orders of sacrifice ; the great, the middle, and the least. Ask now, which of the deities we worship has the



greater sacrifices. Ask how much we spend on our palaces, our sensual luxury, how much on a pure education and a noble benevolence; and say if it be not worth the thought of those, who "profess and call themselves Christians." We talk of Pagan idolatry: let us purge our own. We mourn over the failure of our missions; let us ask what too often is the actual Christianity that goes along with them; which preaches louder, the voice of the Gospel, or the voice of our selfish vices? When I have seen the Turk in the Levant turn in scorn from the worshipper of Jesus, who could only lie and steal; when I have seen in the far East our good missionaries teaching a divine religion, and a crowd of Christian merchants buying men for servitude and forcing opium on them at the cannon's mouth, I have not wondered that the Pagan did not soon embrace a faith he only knew through those who vilified its heart. And if we carry out the principle, we shall find parallels enough. Apply it to the state. The most striking feature of the later Roman religion was the worship of the Divine Augustus, the man-god of the empire. Is not the man-god more often worshipped than the God-man in our social affairs? What matters it if we should vote, as some wish, for the verbal recog-

nition of a Deity in our Constitution, if there be not in the national conscience virtue enough to keep the simplest laws of His truth and righteousness? "Son of Man," saith Jeremy, "if any of the house of Israel setteth up his idols in his heart, and cometh to inquire of me, I the Lord will answer him according to his idols." This is the polytheism we may practice ; and the idols of the heart may be as hateful in his eyes, as if they were carved of wood or stone.

We sum up here, then, our evidence of this truth in the real life of mankind. We open the prophecies of an Isaiah, and read the story of a people, the possessors of this sublime faith, yet at last withered to the core ; and when we ask the cause, we find it was their moral unbelief, that made even such a religion powerless. That fact has been repeated again and again in Christian history. Turn to the seventh century of our religion, when the doctrine of the incarnate Christ had become a lifeless speculation, and all from the court to the church without private or social virtue, and you see a Mohammed in the name of one God smiting the Christian empire to the dust. Strange spectacle ! Yet the living faith in the mouth of an Arab prophet was mightier than a dead civiliza-

tion. There are examples enough of the same truth, if we have eyes to see. Turn to the Roman court just before the Reformation, when it rivalled that of Tiberius in its refined profligacy, when scholars and priests laughed at Christianity; and you will appreciate the saying of a German thinker, that "Luther saved the world from the new Paganism." Turn to the France of the most Christian King Louis XIV, and you will not wonder that even after a Bossuet there came a D'Holbach and a Diderôt. Look at any of the periods, when unbelief has become a social distemper; and you find it has always been the time of a lifeless religion in the Church, of a full grown sensual refinement in the social world.

Let then, my brethren, this first and stateliest law of Israel teach us the lesson of our own time. We talk of infidelity as its threatening evil; of the alarming growth of every shape of falsehood in science and letters; but it is to a deeper cause we are to trace the distempers of our modern world. I care little what theories of a God or a soul our men of science may draw from their researches into the fossils of a cavern, or the chemistry of the body; I do not fear that any doctrine of evolution can touch the spiritual truth, which natural science never gave, and can never

destroy. It is not intellectual denial ; it is the moral denial we have to fear. Let there be with us the living faith in God, which manifests itself in reverence for His laws, in the purity of the household, in the spiritual life of those who are professed followers of His Son, in the social virtue that keeps the heart of a people, and our Christianity will endure. But if these wither, if an age of selfish wealth, of fast-growing luxury palsy the life of our civilization ; if our freedom become only a license ; if our greed eat into the fibre of our manhood, our integrity, our justice, our honor ; if the love of humanity wax cold and the social meaning of Christ's religion be forgotten ; if these be thy gods, O Israel ! it matters not what stately churches rise in every street, and priests minister at the altar ; the outward name of Christian cannot preserve us, but we shall perish as they perished who believed in one God, but forgot that He was the God of holiness and truth.

## II.

## IMAGE WORSHIP.

*"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them."*—EXOD. XX. 4, 5.

*"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."*—I JOHN V. 21.

WE might almost think, my brethren, as we listen to this commandment of Moses, that we hear the voice of Him who sate by Jacob's well, and spake to a time already prepared for a spiritual worship. It seems at first glance in strange discord with a religion so rich in its ritual, suited like a language of pictured symbols to a child-like people, yet here so stern in its simplicity. But as we study the design of the law, we shall see in it another proof of divine wisdom; and even for us, with all our ideas of a Christian faith, a warning against idolatry as needful as for those who lived in that ruder age.

I sought, in my sermon on the first commandment, to show you the truth of the unity of God in its moral meaning ; and the origin of polytheism in the perversion of the sensuous fancy. The second commandment is, indeed, in one sense only another clause of the former. It has been a question, on which our best interpreters are not agreed, whether we ought to take both as one ; and we sometimes unfairly blame the Romish doctors, as if they had dared to lower a divine law in the wish to screen their own image worship, while in truth they have followed an old division of the code. Yet I can but think that both the nature of the falsehood and the strength with which it is so often attacked in the Old Testament, prove this to have been a special statute. Idolatry, although akin to the faith in many gods, is by no means the same thing. There have been nations, like the Persian, who worshipped the powers of light, yet were almost as free as the Israelite from this grosser feature ; and the use of idols was forbidden among the early Romans by the laws of Numa, on the ground that the gods were invisible.

Yet it was and is to this day the almost universal custom of the heathen world ; and we shall open one of the most fruitful chapters

in the religious history of mankind, if we study the rise and growth of idolatry. It seems to us well-nigh beyond our understanding, when we find in every age before Christ, not only the rudest savage, but the most refined nations debased by such sensual worship. Whence could spring this folly? How could men believe dumb, dead matter divine? how fall down to a graven image and pray to it, and say, "Thou art my God?" Yet, if we will study the full meaning of St. Paul's words, we shall read the secret: "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible men, and birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things." Idolatry, is, in a word, the corruption of a deep truth. We can know the unseen God only in His visible works, in the host of heaven and the rich life of the earth. All are the image of His glory. And thus, again, as we are not pure spirits, but clothed in body, it is the necessary bidding of a human heart to utter its thoughts, its cravings through some outward symbolism. If there be in us that purity which draws us to Him as a holy Being, a personal mind and heart, the outward worship only lifts us through the seen to the unseen Maker; but if the moral eye be blinded, the tendency is always

to identify the presence and life of God with the visible sign. This was the root of idolatry ; and hence it was the second step in the natural history of polytheism.

We have seen already that this religion began with the worship of the personified powers of nature. But the adoration of a vague life in star or river could not satisfy the craving for a nearer, more real object ; and therefore the childish fancy sought to image these manifold beings in symbols of wood or stone. Now arose the hill-altars and sacred groves, and then the temples, which gave "a local habitation and a name" to the deities. In its infancy, this symbolic art was a rude bodying forth of the religious thought, as when the Hindu expressed in the three-headed and many-armed Siva his notion of power ; or the Egyptian, as he looked on the Nile, pouring its life-giving flood, felt a mysterious presence in its teeming forms, and enshrined the ibis or the crocodile. It reached its perfection with the Greek, whose marvellous sense of beauty gave to his gods that human yet ideal grace which charms us still in the master works of a Phidias. Yet the worship, whether grosser or more refined, had the same practical result. Many of the wiser minds saw in the idol no more than a



picture or a toy for the child: and if you ask a Brahman to-day what his belief is, he will tell you that he does not worship the image, but only the divine presence that hallows it. But to the people such metaphysical niceties were not possible; the image was God, and in that dwelt a sacred life, a supernatural power, to which they knelt and prayed and sacrificed. Here was its worst influence on the heathen mind. The conscience, the moral affections were stifled; religion became a childish belief in charm, magic, augury; a blind fear of evil gods, a ritual that not only fed the fancy with outward show, but consecrated the foulest vices. What a strange, sad history it is, whether we follow it as it exists to-day in the poor fetich-worshipper of Africa, or in that classic religion, so perfect in its beauty as we gaze on the marble Apollo or read the verse of Sophocles; yet as we draw nearer, it drops the veil and we see the sensual reality!

But I cannot linger here. I turn to that Hebrew people, with whose law we are specially concerned, and ask you in this light to see the reason why the command was so seemingly excessive. It was, doubtless, more needful for a young, untaught nation, that their

faith should be jealously guarded. There were no races of the old world, where idol-worship appears in more loathsome shapes than in the families of Canaanite and Syrian, with whom they were surrounded. You see there one of the eldest born of natural religions. Bel the Sun, Ashtaroth, queen of heaven, and a throng of lesser Baalim were imaged in temples, like that stately Baalbec, whose colossal columns at this day stand like the lonely genius of the old Paganism above its grave. We read everywhere of the lustful orgies, the cruel sacrifices of that land; and most fearful of all, of Moloch the fire-god, whose brazen statue stood with outstretched arms to receive the living child, rolled into the red furnace below. These accursed rites haunted the fancy of the Hebrew; and the valley of Hinnom, south of the city, where the "children passed through the fire," was the symbol of Gehenna, the fire eternal. Yet, strange to say, they were always lapsing into like idolatry. We recall the stolen images in the tent of the patriarch; we see the froward people under the rock of Horeb, practising the Apis-worship of Egypt; we find under Solomon, and yet more under kings like Ahab, the rite of the groves and the priestly orgies of Baal. Hence the

statute was given in such stern language. It has been indeed questioned whether we are to understand it in all its literal force ; and our best expositors now interpret it by the last clause of the text, as not the absolute forbidding of any carved or graven image, but of such as were designed for worship. Moses made a brazen serpent, and in the temple there were figures of cherubim, and of oxen supporting the great laver. Yet no form of art, picture, or statue could represent the unseen God ; the Holy of Holies could have no image, but its veil shrouded the lonely place, and even the winged cherubim were ideal forms, copied from no real creature, which only added to the mystery, brooding in silence over the worshippers. I know nothing that so impresses us with the inner spirit of the religion, from its very unlikeness to all else in that gorgeous temple-service, with its smoking altars, its priestly invocations and chants of praise. It is indeed one of the strange contrasts blended in the national character. You see in the Jew, on one side, the type of every later ritualist, who can only worship God through the symbolism of his altar-cloths ; and on another a stern Puritan, an image-breaker, whose mission is to hew all religious fancies in pieces. Such, from first to last, was the influence

of this law. It kept pure a worship that would else have passed into the same immoral vices as the Paganism about it. It checked the abuse that lay in human nature. Open the writings of the prophets, the noblest poetry in any literature, and note with what energy they hurl their rebukes on kings and priests who "made Israel to sin." What bolts of sarcasm, what bursts of wrath, that sound like the thunders still breaking afar off over the peaks of Horeb! That history tells us the result. The Jews became formalists, but never a people of idolaters. As you read the old story of the visit of the Roman general to the Holy City; of his wonder when he tore aside with his rude hand the veil of the temple, and saw the mystery of the holy place, empty, dark, with no image of a god, you have the same strange fact told in our time by the Chinese missionaries, who sought out the poor synagogue in some corner of their far country, and looked with awe on the simple Hebrew legends, the only symbols of the ancient worship. That law has been the keeper of the truth amidst their decay.

I reach here the point where we are to ask the bearing of such a law on our Christian duty. It may seem, indeed, as we look at the condition and wants of that Hebrew people, rather one of

the local statutes of their religion, than of those which should belong to a moral code. I do not suppose that Christianity forbids the art of sculpture or of painting ; nor even that it excludes the master-works of genius from the walls of the Church. Art is the devout minister of religion. I cannot, therefore, agree with those who charge the Roman communion with the transgression of this sacred law, because it has allowed such usage. Who has ever looked on that stately group of the apostles, with the divine form of the Lord amidst them, as they stand in the Protestant cathedral of Copenhagen, without feeling that they inspire, not mar the worship ? We must indeed guard the allowance with care ; nor can a reverent mind, I think, regard without pain the representations of the invisible God in the face of man, such as we see even in the marvellous paintings of a Raffaele. No art should forget its limits. But while we cannot take this Hebrew law in its exact sense, for this very reason we must know its deeper moral meaning ; and this it is I wish to urge with the utmost clearness.

If, then, my friends, you have followed me in my sketch of the origin and error of image worship, you have perceived that it was the corruption of a weighty truth ; and that the corruption


lay in confounding the outward image with the spiritual Being, who is the only object of our devotion. This is superstition in its very root, the falsehood that stands above and hides the truth. But if this be so, there may be a Christian idolatry as well as a Pagan. You will, perhaps, anticipate my thought, and say that I mean the Roman Catholic religion. No, my friends, I mean more, and much more than that; I mean the spirit which begot its error. For what is Romanism, I ask, as I asked before of Pagan worship? When we look with our one-sided Protestant eyes at that strange edifice, half Christian and half heathen, with a remnant of primitive creed, yet a fantastic mythology, its saint-worship, its mass, its dramatic ritual, we are prone to wonder at it, as if it grew the solitary falsehood of a middle age. But it is wholly to lose the charity we should have for the truth embedded in its error, and the power of understanding what the error is. Romanism is only the great example of a tendency inherent in human nature. Much of its system is primitive; the gold of a better time amidst the hay and stubble. Examine in that light certain of its most striking features. Take, for instance, that which some even of our most advanced Churchmen, who are

quite content with its Trentine creed as an Eirenikon, have acknowledged as its worst idolatry—the worship of Mary and the saints. Whence did it spring? It is found in its germ far back in the early time of the Greek Church; it grew out of the ignorant devotion of those who, in a time when the truth of the Incarnate Christ had become a metaphysical theory, turned to some nearer object of faith, and reared those saintly souls into intercessors, just as the Pagan did his demigods. There was in that Greek Church, a fierce, long battle over the *ekons* or pictures, introduced into their worship. It was maintained that the law of God against images did not touch pictures. But when we look at the religion of the people, and know, although the adoration of Mary has never been reared into a dogma, that it is as much a reality as in Rome; when we see, as I have seen in the Patriarchal church of Moscow, as superstitious a worship of relics, we may learn the difference between a Christian art and that which ministers to idolatry. Or turn to the greatest of Roman falsehoods,—the mass. You are amazed at a religion that can affirm such an absurdity as that the bread is changed into Christ's real body. Yet if you trace it back, it grew long before

the dogma of transubstantiation, from the fancy of a magic change, wrought by consecration in the elements ; and so the simple feast of the supper became a miracle of the altar. The dogma only came after the slow-ripening superstition had fastened itself on the popular faith. Ask the Latin priest what he believes, and he will tell you, as the Brahman does, that he adores a divine presence in the host, not the elements themselves. But what is it to the worshippers, who know nothing of these scholastic niceties ? It is their God ; their atoning sacrifice ; the channel of grace through which their salvation flows ; and that idol worship has with them the same influence as with the Hindu ; it makes them far more anxious for the priestly service than for real communion with Christ, or a real life of holy duty. Where is the difference between the moral principle of the Pagan and the Roman worship ? None whatever. Each changes a God, who is pure spirit, into a visible, local and corporal presence. Each confounds the symbol with the reality it only represents. It may be said, indeed, that the reverence of such a Deity is far purer than that of a Venus or a Mars. Undoubtedly. But it is the very vice of idolatry, that it substitutes a blind fancy for a moral affection ; and when we



remember that religious fervor has been so often linked with sins as foul as any of Pagan type ; what numbers have lived in open sin yet knelt devoutly at the altar ; what victims have been burned at the stake for denial of this absurdity, we cannot disguise the likeness. Sever the object of our religious faith from intelligence and conscience, and it becomes a sensuous falsehood. We hear repeated by our scholastic sophists to-day the hair-drawn subtleties of the Latin communion, of a hyper-physical presence, which is yet in the bread ; a supralocal life, which is yet on the altar. But the mysticism ends in the same superstition. I have often thought when I have witnessed this poor mimicry of the mass, that I could see the form of Isaiah rising before us, and uttering his words of scathing irony as to the image-makers of his time ; " The husbandman soweth the seed and reapeth the grain in the autumn ; he gathereth the flour of wheat ; then shall it be for a man to eat ; for he will take thereof and bake bread ; he baketh part in the fire, yea, he eateth his fill, and saith aha ! I am fed ; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his wheaten image ; he boweth threto, he crosseth himself, he worship-peth it, and saith, Atone for me, for thou art



my God ; and none considereth in his heart, nor saith : I have baked part in the fire, with part thereof I have sated my hunger, and shall I make the residue an abomination, shall I fall down to a loaf of bread? He feedeth on ashes ; a blind heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot see, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?"

These instances are enough to show you the principle of the error. Read Christian history with the same eyes as heathen history, and you know that each of its superstitions has been a like perversion of a truth. And what then does it prove, save the need of guarding ourselves with wisdom against the tendency of our human fancy to the self-same mistake? I trust my view will be plainly understood. Let none think it implies a want of reverence for the outward ordinances of our religion. Far from it. The spirit that undervalues any hallowed rite, and still more the sacraments of Christ, may be and often is another form of idolatry. There are those who worship, instead of a living Christ, their own wooden and stony forms of theology, and it will leave them just as hard, as narrow, as loveless as any other superstition. I have met a pagan with a devout heart, and a Christian bowing to his images : a Romanist with a sin-

cere love of Christ, and a Protestant holding a fierce creed with a spiritual name. Holiness and unholiness are not severed by our boundary lines. Good men have had these views, which I have given you, and we may love their piety in spite of their opinions. But if I have shown anything in this study of a weighty truth, it is that we must know where the real line is between the spiritual worship we owe to our Lord, and an untrue worship. We may not accept the specific idolatry of a Roman Church, but we may unwittingly nurse the error out of which it grew. Apply this principle to your own religion and test its meaning. The sacraments of Christ are hallowed means of grace. We know that if we use them in faith and penitence, we shall receive in their use a divine gift from Him, who communes by His spirit with our souls. That presence is in us, a real presence to our minds and hearts; it can be in no material thing; and while we regard these consecrated elements with a reverent feeling, we worship Him alone; Him not in them, but Him who is spirit and life. Any other view than this leads and must lead to a gross worship, that involves the very fancy of the idolater. If we come to this table of Holy Communion, thinking of any

presence save this to our hearts, believing that a priestly consecration gives efficacy to these creatures of bread and wine, we shall lose the truth of the personal Christ in our Eucharistic adoration, and so lose the great purpose of the sacrament ; we shall narrow our life of communion with Him into an act of sacramental communion ; we shall think less of our real faith and holiness, or of our union with all His real followers. Thus it is with every ordinance. If we bring our children to baptism, and fancy some magic work wrought by the water on the nature of the infant, we shall in that degree lose our intelligent conception of it as a real adoption into Christ's household, a new birth into a life of holy growth. And need I say that it may thus be made an idol? Are there not too many, far more anxious to secure the outward rite than to bring up their offspring in a sober, righteous, and godly way? Are there not too many who have held that monstrous fancy, that an unbaptized infant is in peril of losing its salvation, and who have thus changed Christ's ordinance of love into the denial of the whole heart of His Gospel? This, then, is my plain meaning. This is the process of our idolatry. The truth which it concerns us to know, is that our doctrinal errors do not first lead to false

worship, but the worship to the doctrinal error. I think we should understand it. We have sad proofs that it is not understood ; we have seen under the mask of reverence usages as childish, as superstitious as any of Latin birth ; doctrines of a visible presence, a sacrifice of the altar, a priestly absolution, such as make our Christian churchmen of more sober days ask whether we have lost our identity ; and all has grown through a divorce of the fancy from a clear knowledge ; from the pomp of service, the charm of vestment and music, the sensuous mystery that bewilders the vague mind, and dazzles it into falsehood. Strange transformation ! while many thought it only a fairer worship, idolatry has crept upon them ; and now some stand aghast, and say, as the stammering Aaron said to his brother, when he saw the people dancing under the shadow of Horeb, " They gave me this gold, and I cast it into the fire, and it came out this—calf." There is a golden sentence of the sage Hillel, kept in the Talmud : " The Holy of Holies was left empty, to teach thee, o Israel, that no place containeth the Eternal One ; but thine heart is His sanctuary." We grasp here the principle of a Christian symbolism. We adore God in the Incarnate

Son ; we consecrate to Him the richest symbols a devout art can furnish ; but the beauty of art must rest on truth, and when it forgets this, in whatever æsthetic form it may disguise itself, it is the pandar alike of art and of religion.

And thus, brethren, may we keep steadfastly, as we have received from our divine Master, his worship of spirit and truth ! I have given you no subtleties of a scholastic theology, but the precept of a Christian duty. Let that belief in the unseen Lord, the one giver of pardon and grace, who allows no material symbol, no priestly mediator between the soul and himself, let that be our supreme law, and our service will be worthy, however rich or elaborate. Accept Him in the knowledge that His Gospel is not to feed the fancy or sickly sentiment, but for a reasonable faith and a real holiness ; accept His sacraments as He gave them, to be no riddles for your speculation, no magic rites, but aids in your communion with Him, symbols that are empty without Him ; and such a union will knit you with all who love Him in sincerity, will enlarge your charity, hallow your daily calling, and nourish in you the pure and undefiled religion of a Christian life.

## III.

## REVERENCE.

*"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain : for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh His name in vain."*—EXOD. xx. 7.

*"Serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."*—HEB. xii. 28.

IT was a striking feature of the Hebrew religion, that the name of Jehovah, the great and awful name, as it is called by the teachers of the law, was not allowed to be spoken, but another word with whose vowel-points it is written was put in its stead ; and even its true pronunciation is still a riddle to the scholar. The fact may seem to some minds a proof of superstition, and, indeed, it has been so called by the first of modern writers on Jewish history. But, although it may have been wrested to formalism, it rose out of a heartfelt feeling, which created much that is noblest in the character of this wonderful people. It was this spirit of reverence which the ancient religion educated in its worshippers ;

and while our Christian faith has no bondage to the letter, it hallows such an affection as one with a living piety.

In this view, therefore, we learn the full meaning of the third Commandment. It has been commonly understood, as it seems to read on the surface, to be only a law against false or profane swearing ; yet, although such a vice needed rebuke then and always, it would be strange to find it placed in the forefront among these stately utterances of moral truth. If we turn to the Sermon on the Mount, where we have so rich a commentary on many points of the later Rabbinical casuistry, we gain strong proof of our larger interpretation. The Pharisee, under the cover of this reverent custom, had lost the heart of the statute ; and while one could swear by Jehovah, the Jew swore by everything else,—heaven, earth, and his own head. No Gentile was profaner than this scrupulous Israelite. Perjury itself could be passed by in the courts, if there were no literal breaking of the Mosaic rule. But Christ said to these dead casuists, that the fear of God's name must be a deeper law than this ; all things, heaven and earth and our own life, all are God's. It is plain, then, that here is a much broader precept than against the use of



an oath. Nothing in truth can show more clearly how often its whole drift has been mistaken, by narrowing it to one vice alone, than in the case of the Quaker, who objects to the judicial oath as profane. Yet the judicial oath enforces the strict spirit of the law ; it clothes the name of God with the sanction of the tribunal, and if it be abused, the sin lies in the perjurer, not in the solemn act. We study, then, the purpose of the commandment in the character of the religion. It was therefore its author embodied it in a stately ritual, of which every part should lift the minds of men to His purity ; the Holy of Holies, behind whose mysterious veil no common foot might tread ; the daily sacrifice, the temple courts, rich with the fairest art, yet without an image to entice the eye from the unseen glory. Amidst these safeguards the conscience of the rude people was trained to social virtue. This brooding sense of a Presence, before whom silence was the best devotion ; of an unseen God, the I am that I am, was always supreme. To swear by his gods was the most common usage of the heathen ; and it grew out of a worship that of necessity debased the heart of moral reverence. But to the Hebrew that name was no vulgar word ; it was the ineffable,

the name of Him who dwelt in the heaven of heavens, who must not be approached with unclean heart or lips ; and although in later times the spirit of the law had faded away, we know from the record of the past how much it did in shaping not only the habit of worship, but the graces of the household and the daily life.

You have here, my fiends, a truth, which I may well commend to your study. I am the more concerned to urge it, because in my former discourse I enforced the spiritual side of our religion against a sensual falsehood ; and I would now urge on you the harmony of an inward faith and a true reverence. I would show the dependence of our piety on this Christian affection. And I beg you to consider with deep attention the ground on which it rests, as we look at it, first, in its more general relation to our personal conduct, and again, to the spirit of our worship. It needs only a glance indeed at our mental and moral habits, to know how the law of association is inwoven into the web of our life. We are so made that our thought, our feeling must have an utterance ; and not the articulate word alone, but each look, each gesture is the language that reveals the man. The deaf mute is not the only creature who uses sign

speech; we all use it, and without it social existence would lose nine tenths of its charm. The bowed head and deferent tone express our respect; the dress we wear, the grasp of the hand, the address of a letter, the arrangements of house or table have each a meaning. We acknowledge the worth of these associations, trivial as they are in themselves. True, we are disgusted with the hypocrisy of social life, the fashion that covers vulgarity, or the courtesy that hides a deeper hate; yet we do not praise him, who, because his heart is honest, scorns such social graces; we suspect an indelicate mind in indelicate speech, a boorish character in boorish manners. Nor does refinement of speech and manner only add beauty to life, but very much of the strength of society is linked with it. Manners, as the old proverb says, are minor morals. Who does not feel instinctively the purity of soul which shines forth in pure words; the kindliness that is always deferent to the feelings of others, the modesty which gives grace to intellect and rank? Who does not love in this easy day to meet here and there a relic of the old stately courtesy, now dying out with the old costume; for we miss it

not only as a memento of the past, but we miss the honor and nobleness that went with it ?

Surely then, Christian friends, it is unavoidable to apply the same truth to our religion. For if religion be born in the heart, it must hallow the feelings of the heart ; and, more, if the God we worship be one to whom we bow as before no earthly being, we need a deeper reverence. Piety must be, indeed, a life within ; and the reverence which is only outward costume, is falsehood ; but so long as we have this human nature, we must depend on the law of association. Intellectual belief alone does not sway us ; our faith is linked with places and persons, with memories of childhood, with the family Bible and family altar, the chimes of Christmas, festival and fast ; with all that makes the religion of Christ a household and social power. Who can reckon the worth of these influences ? The nurture of the young depends, above all else, on the growth of the heart in holy habits ; and in later years we are as truly guided and guarded by such associations, unless we have outgrown the natural affections. Unbelief comes oftener from irreverent association than intellectual doubt. The sneer of a Voltaire has killed more than all his arguments ; for, in Paley's keen words, " who can re-

fute a sneer?" The youth who grows in the midst of profane minds imbibes a scorn of truth before he has searched a single doctrine, as the breath of an infected garment may engender disease. In this light, my friends, you perceive how this old commandment covers the whole ground of our Christian conduct. Consider its direct bearing on our personal habits of speech and intercourse, our "conversation," as the Scripture uses that word in its broad social sense. We are not merely warned against the open profanity of the lips, but we need the purity that watches every word and act. What moral precept is so often forgotten? A jesting tone of talk on religious truths, a habit of reckless criticism on religious things, is to take the name of God in vain as truly as the vulgar oath; and when I hear him, who calls himself a Christian or a gentleman, indulging in burlesque of this sort, I at once recognize some moral defect in him. Intellect without reverence is the head of a man joined to a beast. There are many who think it a proof of wit; but it is the cheapest sort of wit, and shows as much lack of brain as of moral feeling. What is easier than to find religious vices or follies to laugh at? What is easier than for an idiot or an ape to mimic the gait of a deformed man? I

would say it with emphasis to each Christian youth who hears me ; never indulge that habit, never allow sacred things to be jested at without rebuke ; but keep them, as you would the miniature of your mother for no vulgar hands to touch. There is an anecdote of Boyle, that he never pronounced the name of God without an audible pause ; and whatever you may think, I recognize in it the dictate of a wise heart. We need this reverence in the air of social life ; we need it against the error lurking in so many shapes around us, and its neglect will palsy our piety.

But the precept goes further yet, when we consider the spirit of our Christian worship. There cannot be a whole-minded piety, which does not cherish a reverence of divine things. There cannot be a more one-sided error than that which leads us to scorn, or hold indifferent the externals of religion. Superstition is an evil. Formalism is an evil. But what is superstition ? It is belief in an error that covers up the truth. What is formalism ? Not the use of form, but its abuse. It is, then, a reverence seated in the mind, the well-governed conscience, the enlightened affections ; a reverence that breathes the spirit into the form, it is this alone

our religion would enjoin. It must begin with that faith in God, that intelligent faith which knows Him as the personal Father in His Son Jesus Christ, yields to Him alone our homage, and seeks from His spirit alone a spiritual grace. But when that belief is indeed a life in our hearts, it sends the life-blood into cheek, and eye, and farthest limb. It demands not inward thought alone, but visible expression. I reach here the true view of a Christian symbolism, as it is distinguished from the false symbolism, which I sought to expose in my former discourse. It does not identify Christ with the sacraments. It does not substitute a sensuous mystery for a reasonable faith. But it is the calling of sacred art to convey in its rich, varied utterance, as it is fitted to the whole nature of man, the truth of Him who revealed His divine beauty in human form. It builds the church as the colossal emblem of the cross ; it makes music the universal language of praise. Our liturgical worship grew out of the life of Christianity. And therefore we prize all that is pure and beautiful, as it has come down to us from the devotion of the past ; we reverence the house of God, not that He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, dwells in our temples as a local presence, but that our faith

hallows the spot as the home of our communion ; we love the solemn prayer, the Psalter rising from minister and answering people, the stately chant that lifts us to devotion. This feeling reaches to the least as well as greatest offices of worship. The silent petition which we offer at entering, prepares us for our social praise. The bending of the knee is the instinct of the bending heart. A philosopher may say, that to look up to God is to suppose an above or a below to Omnipresence ; but it is enough that our humble aspiration prompts it. We prize the bowing of the head at the name of Christ, for it is surely a mark of that honor we pay to our King and Lord, not to forget the reverence we should pay even in the courts of an earthly prince. All that jars on this feeling is offensive. When we see a careless, self-obtrusive worshipper, who forgets that he is in the house of God ; when we hear the prayers more fitted for familiar talk than for Him to whom our words should be few ; nay, worse, the prayers of fine rhetoric, even "the finest ever delivered to a cultivated audience ;" when we hear the half-disguised snatches of an opera from a choir seeking to praise itself, not the Almighty, we are conscious of a wrong not only against taste, but Christian morals.



If then, my friends, you have learned this law of a whole minded piety, you will know how to distinguish it from all untruth on either hand. It is not possible to lay down any exact rules as to the forms of a Christian worship. We love the service of our own communion, because we believe it holds the golden mean between an excessive ritual and a bare simplicity ; but we need not less honor the piety of those who, by their disposition or habit, prefer a plainer or a richer one. Our form is not perfect. There is, and ought to be, large room in the Christian church for variety of taste ; and our law in such undefined things should be that of a generous charity. But what we need is the sound mind, the devout training that shall guard us against every danger. We are never to lose sight of either of the "rival follies." I cannot therefore agree with the sentiment of Burke, that "there is no rust of superstition, which should not be preferred to unbelief." Superstition is the foster-brother of unbelief. There is one only limit to our freedom in this matter. It is our right and duty, while we should never be troubled about vestments and candles, to resist any ritual that embodies false doctrine. We must not forget that tendency. If these fair rites, beautiful as the costume of our

religion, be reared into the rank of essential things, our own false spirit will spoil the best of gifts, and overshadow the faith which it pretends to uphold, as the ivy creeps over the mouldering wall of the church. But this danger is not to be met by the opposite error. I honor the Puritan for his manliness in defending his freedom against an iron uniformity; I can allow much for his one-sidedness in a day when all were one-sided; but I do not honor the folly which swept away the good and evil together, which hewed down with axe and hammer the fair walls of the Church; and which still, in the name of a spiritual piety, casts contempt on prayer book, festival and fast, and every fitting ceremony. That is not intelligence. That is not piety. It may spring from a conscientious motive, but it feeds fat the irreligious humors of the time. When Cartwright denounced the use of the cross in baptism, it was the wise answer of Hooker: "It is not, you say, the cross in our foreheads, but in our hearts the life of Christ, which as we grant most true, so neither dare we despise, no, not the meanest helps that serve, though in the lowest degree of furtherance toward the highest." When Wotton was attacked for his English worship by those who called it a poor compromise, he said: "Think

not that to be farthest from Rome, is to be nearest to God." This is the spirit we need to cherish. If we have the Christian education which teaches first the essentials of a real holiness, and values all else as means to that one end, our worship shall be worthy of the church of God. We shall not worship the prayer book, but Christ. We shall not fear any wise revision, which may make it fitter for its living aim; but prize it and use it with a noble freedom, as men who know its real worth, and make it all it was designed to be, no badge of our exclusiveness, but the bond of our largest communion.

Such is the lesson, Christian brethren, we need above all at this time to learn. It is a day alike of irreverence and of superstition. But the cure is not from without; it is from within. There is no other remedy for either evil than the cultivation of a sound intelligence and a living piety. If there be anything strange in the history of religious follies, it seems surely this, that we have among us so many who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing, after ages of strife; that we have still our image-makers and our image-breakers; our devotees, eager for every relic of a mediæval ritual, dreaming that they can regenerate

Christendom by vestments, incense, candles and altar-service, educating only a childish fancy instead of a true reverence, retarding every healthy growth by a movement that moves backward ; and, on the other hand, our staunch believers, who, in their fear of all motion, prefer lethargy ; or our lovers of a Gospel piety, who look on bowing in the Creed, or a vase of Easter flowers, as things savoring of superstition. Is it to be always so? Are we never, in a church that boasts itself to have in its whole structure the true harmony, to learn what that harmony means? I trust so. I trust we are to pass by-and-by out of this wretched strife ; and without being transformed into a dull copy of the past, or a church which believes, as has been said of us, "that we are saved by taste," to learn the living and large spirit of our worship. Yet at least let us, brethren, learn it for ourselves, and act upon it. Let us "pray with the spirit and the understanding also." Let these gifts be the means of our growth in a steadfast faith in Christ, and a better love for all the members of His Church of every name. So shall we build our piety, as Israel built the Temple ; without, the costliest work that faith could rear ; the walls overlaid with gold, each door carved with cherubim and

palms and open flowers: each pillar with its chapiters and wreaths; its vessels, its lamps, its censers of the beaten gold of Ophir; an house of God, finished throughout all the parts thereof; but within, the Holy of Holies, where the unseen God dwells alone behind the veil of the heart!

## IV.

## THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY.

*"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."*—EXOD. XX. 8-11.

*"The Sabbath was made for man."*—ST. MARK II. 27.

AS I approach this law of the Sabbath, Christian friends, it is with such reverence as when I looked on the colossal foundation-stones which still support the wall of the Holy City, the work of its oldest builders, yet unbroken amidst the changes of time or the ravages of men. We cannot study the history of Israel, without learning how much this feature of the religion had to do in shaping the character of the people. It was, embedded in the national life. Yet I enter on it

with far more difficulty than on any of the commandments, because there is such variety of opinion as to its obligation on our Christian faith. If, however, we examine it with simple fidelity to the Word of God, we can find the ground removed alike from mere tradition or a lawless freedom ; and I shall endeavor thus to show the full spirit of the statute in the light of our Lord's teaching, that the Sabbath was made for man.

We are to study the origin of the day, first of all, as a Hebrew institution. It is admitted by all interpreters, that as a positive law with its duties and penalties, it begins with the solemn enforcement of the Mosaic code in the desert. There are many who have claimed it as a primeval ordinance for the human race ; and they sustain this opinion by certain traces of it in early history, as well as by the sentence in the second chapter of the Genesis, repeated in the law itself, which tells us that God rested on the seventh day. Such traces are found without a doubt in the record of the patriarchs, as in the request of Laban to Jacob, "fulfil her week" (Gen. xxix. 27); and we may believe from the story of those who gathered the manna, that the day was kept before the express command of Moses. It was probably therefore an ancient tradition, preserved among this

pastoral people. Yet it would be unwarrantable to infer from these instances either its institution at the beginning, or its universal observance. There are indeed historians, who think that the week was in use among several Eastern nations, Assyrians, Arabians and even Chinese ; but our best critics find no clear record save among the Egyptians, and with them it is probable that the origin is to be traced to planetary reckoning. It seems, moreover, unwise to rest an argument on such words as those of the Genesis. Unless we can insist on the fact that the days of creation were literally of twenty-four hours each, we can apply no literal sense to the rest of God on the seventh. We should read those words in the spirit of that early age ; and thus we feel indeed the divine truth which inspired them, which hallowed the day to the Israelite as a majestic type of the one living Creator, in whose "hand are all the times" of man.

In this view we turn to the time and the stately scene of the wilderness, where the Sabbath appears with all its sanctions of warning and blessing. That history might seem, indeed, to our eyes of the sternest character. It entered into the minutest details of social as well as religious life. No Jew could kindle a fire to dress



his food ; none could follow his secular calling ; none could journey beyond the most narrow limits. But when we look at this ordinance, as we should at all of the ancient record, in its bearing on the education of a rude people, we cannot fail to see in it one of the noblest sources of faith and purity. It spoke to them of Him, to whom their life was a service. It gave a specific season for the solemn rites of that worship, which severed them from the Pagan nations around them. There is, indeed, no people whose social spirit has not led to such divisions of sacred time. But who that turns to this Hebrew record, does not feel how much more the roots of the national affection were entwined with these religious gatherings ; who does not recall the bright picture of the crowds, as they came up together from every village to the Holy City, and mingled their chants to the God of Israel ? That sacred Sabbath is the key to their social history. It has been thought by some ingenious critics that the word itself is akin to the mystic numeral seven ; but, although this is probably a fancy, it became the golden number of all their reckonings. The seventh month was the season of the two great festivals of the Tabernacles and the Atonement ; the seventh year gave rest to the land ; and the jubilee,

when seven times seven had rolled away, crowned the whole with the Sabbath of humanity ; a national act of unselfish love unmatched in the history of the world, even under the light of a Christian civilization ; a year that broke the bonds of the slave, and taught the people that there was no ownership in man, but all was the gift of the merciful God. This feature of a wise humanity should never be forgotten in our study of such a law ; for it lends us, as we are yet to see, the point of view from which we learn its true influence on our Christian legislation. "That thy man servant and thy maid servant may rest as well as thou," was the kindly precept it taught to the Hebrew master. Nay, it anticipated even that last, finest trait of our benevolence—which some in our own day look on as a weak fancy—for it was a Sabbath of repose to the hard-worked beast of the field. Nor must I pass by another fact, too often overlooked by those, who have made the Christian Sabbath a gloomier one than that of the Hebrew. The day was one of religious worship ; yet it was always held as a social, family festival ; and it was the custom of the wealthier, while they allowed no hot dishes, to spread the table with the best, and to welcome kindred and friends. It was thus the day of charity to the poor, and

hospitality was part of the religion. On whatever side we regard it, here was one of the most ennobling statutes of the code; and therefore it remained through the long ages of the national life, stamped on the heart of the people. At times, as we know from the stern rebukes of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, its power was lost in the growing greed and irreverence of the Israelite; but it was the formal tradition of the Pharisee more than all other causes, which destroyed its spirit. Turn to the New Testament, and learn from the life of our Lord how strangely it had been transformed into a statute of minute observances, which robbed it of the very heart of love. His withering reply to those who rebuked Him for healing on the Sabbath, has a new force when we read in the Rabbinical glosses that a Jew broke the law by pulling an ox out of a pit, and he could only throw in some fodder till the day was past. The act of the lame man, in carrying his mat, was a violation of the rule against bearing burdens. To unmask such narrow follies the Divine Lawgiver of the Gospel urged the spirit of their own religion, and bade them learn that "the Sabbath was made for man."

With this view of the law of the Sabbath I can now pass to the weighty question of the Christian

Lord's Day, and its relation to the ancient statute. I will then, at the outset, present the facts as they stand on the open page of the Gospel history ; since I believe that a clear statement will make further argument quite needless. We have at the close of the Gospels the earliest record of the first day of the week as the time of our Lord's resurrection ; and in memory of that event it became, during the Apostolic age, the recognized festival of the infant Christian community. We know not the exact date when it began to be set apart, but the notices of it are quite enough to show its character. It is mentioned in the Acts as the time when "the Apostles came together to break bread," *i. e.*, for the Lord's Supper. It is urged by the Apostle Paul (Cor. xvi. 2) that believers should "lay by in store," on the first day, for the offering on behalf of the poor ; and the passing allusion makes it probable that it had become already a fixed time of worship. It is named again in the book of the Revelation (i. 9) ; and from the phrase, "the Lord's Day," we may fairly infer, that it had gained that place in Christian worship which must have preceded the specific name. Henceforth it grew more and more into the reverent affection of the Church, until it became the great season of

religious gathering ; and at last, under Constantine, the laws of the empire forbade the opening of the courts and other secular business. Such was its origin and growth. It was the weekly Easter. It spoke to the early believer, as to us, of the risen Lord, and of that risen life in which was the bond of all holy fellowship. What, then, was its relation to the elder institution of the Sabbath? We turn again for an answer to the proofs given us in the New Testament. There can be no doubt whatever that the ancient law was kept among all Jewish Christians, for we read constantly of the Apostles as teaching and joining in the synagogue service of the seventh day. But it is as plain that the Gentile was in no sense bound to observe it. None can read the striking passages from the Epistles of Paul (Coloss. ii. 16, 17.; Rom. xiv. 5, 6,) without perceiving that it is classed with all those Jewish usages, new moons, unclean meats, in regard to which no obligation was laid on the believer. Nor can any fairly accept the express decision of the first Council at Jerusalem, without allowing that it is not included in the "necessary things" for Gentile duty. It must be noted, further, that the Lord's Day was never substituted for the seventh. Each rested on its own ground. The

Gentile kept the feast of the Resurrection. The Jewish Christian kept both days, just as he circumcised his children and baptized them likewise. It remained for many years, and by slow degrees faded away; it was long retained in some churches of the West as a fast, in memory of the Lord's burial before the day of His rising; yet at length it dropped from use, and by the natural law of life, the first day remained alone, the one weekly season of worship. This is the sum of the evidence. It leaves it exactly as in the case of baptism, where the Christian rite took the place of the circumcision by historic change, yet rests on the commandment of Christ and the spirit of a larger Gospel.

Here then, we can fairly state the authority on which the Christian institution stands. Our reverence for the Lord's Day depends, first and highest of all, on its specific character as the feast of the Resurrection, and that apostolic usage which is sacred to Christian men. We recognize, yet more, the historic connexion of the day with the past revelation; we keep it as a grand witness to the unity of our divine religion; and while we do not hold the law of Israel as a letter, we prize its true spirit in our Christian worship. I might close the question here; but as many good men

hold other views on this subject, I will touch briefly on them. I believe that our difference is wholly from the misconception of the principle, and that an honest study of the word of God will lead to full agreement. It is maintained that the authority of the Lord's Day rests on the binding character of the moral law. Undoubtedly there is a higher claim in that law than the ritual statutes of the Mosaic system can have upon us. But it is the nature of this obligation we are to consider. I have already shown that it lies in the intrinsic, changeless morality of the articles of that law, which makes them as true for the Christian as the Hebrew conscience. "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," are statutes for us, not because God gave them in the Jewish code, but because they are and must ever be principles of social duty. We cannot take the law against image-making, for example, in its literal force ; but only its principle as it forbids idol-worship. We cannot, therefore, take this commandment of the Sabbath as an obligation to us to keep the first day of the week. For if we are to keep the day as binding by the Mosaic law, we are not free to change a jot or tittle ; the seventh day is alone binding on us, and the substitution of the first is unwarrant-

able. I cannot see how any, save the seventh-day Baptist, can be logically true to the claim ; and even he must put to death any who gathers sticks, if he will obey the letter. It is answered, again, that the Sabbath is not to be regarded as a Mosaic statute, but as given at the creation, and therefore the appointment of a seventh part of time is a divine law for all. Now if by this be meant, that there is a moral argument for us in this consecration of holy time, it is most true, and the very truth I shall urge ; but when stated as such specific law, it is to lose the principle. If the traces of early history were enough to prove an authoritative institution before the Mosaic time, it would still be the seventh day, not the seventh part of time that is enjoined. I believe, therefore, with full appreciation of its reverent meaning, that such a theory weakens more than strengthens the Divine authority of the Lord's Day. We must not defend a good cause with brittle steel. I must say with Calvin, reasoning on this very notion, that it is to retain the "crass and carnal Sabbatism" of the Jew. It is to substitute for the nobler Christian law another commandment.

But instead of these untenable views, we turn now to the real principle. Yes, I do not lower,



I affirm the divine, changeless truth in that law of Israel. It is uttered in the great sentence of Him who was Lord of the Sabbath,—“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” His words contain our whole reasoning. There was in that ancient institution a purpose, apart from its specific or national character, based on the social nature of man, and, therefore, as unchanging as the law of honesty or purity or family order. It is the need of a season of rest from the aims of our earthly life for the worship of God and the growth of holiness. None can deny that need. It belongs alike to our physical and mental and moral being ; but it is still more the necessity of a religion, which will teach us a nobler end than the pursuit of a material good. That law, therefore, in this deep and comprehensive sense, passed from the Hebrew code into the Church of Jesus Christ. Although the Gospel is far more spiritual in its truth and worship than that earlier faith ; although the lofty precept of St. Paul to the Colossian disciples, “Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or the new moon or the Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ,” expresses the true Christian principle, that all our days, our callings, our aims, are to be hallowed by

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one spirit, yet this Gospel is not a formless, a lawless thing. It, too, creates, sanctions, bequeaths to us every institution that upbuilds the social and Christian life. And thus when we turn to the history of Revelation, we find this one continuous feature, as harmonious with its design as the wisdom that set the sun and moon in heaven to be for seasons, and days, and months, and years, or ordered the night for our refreshing after toil. This is the authority of the Lord's Day. It is, in Jeremy Taylor's words, "not substituted in the place of the obliterated Sabbath, but a feast celebrated by great reason and perpetual consent." It rests on the faith of a Risen Lord, on the life of Christendom since the first believers, and on the abiding spirit of the season as from first to last suited to the wants of the race. We ask no nobler ground than this. Can any be stronger? Can any be so strong? It is an argument of twofold power against all who would impair the obligation of the day, because it plants it on as reasonable as it is Scriptural evidence. I am content to place it here; I want no better authority than I have from Him who tells me that "the Sabbath is made for man." Yet if there be any who ask more, I will add this for their assurance, that the view I have given is that of the body of

the Christian fathers, of many noblest divines of the church of England as well as of the continent, including Calvin himself ; as bright a chain of learning and of holiness as can be found to support any of the principles of the word of God.

In that light we can now pass, Christian friends, from our more general reasoning to the real argument as it speaks to us in the history of our religion. There is the witness none can gainsay. If it were only on the lowest ground of a physical good, we might well say that there is hardly any in the wide range of social laws more worthy of the gratitude of mankind than this. As we read the long record, we learn that from the day of the Apostles it grew with the growth of a pure civilization, until the edict of the empire recognized it as a public blessing ; and it has ever since kept its place as a day which the statesman as well as the Christian delights to honor. It is the ceaseless friend of the poor, and the foe of human selfishness. It comes with a welcome face to the laborer in the field, the workman in the factory, the clerk at his desk, and casts a gleam of sunshine on the thousands in the dark alleys of the city. The furrowed brow grows calm, the flagging heart is refreshed, and the

burdens of life are lifted by its silent hand, as surely as when God drops each night His noiseless dews over the parched earth. Take away the Sunday, and you cannot reckon the loss; its saddest results would be for the poor, whom the unchecked greed of selfish men would grind to the last remnant of time. I need not repeat the evidence, which has proved so fully, that where the Sunday is well kept, health and cleanliness and comfort are found in twofold measure. It has had its defenders even in a Proudhon, whose striking essay on the day as the source of social good is less known than it should be, and claims the special thought of any who refuse to hear its Christian defenders. Yet what are these lesser blessings compared with the Christian good it bestows? Six days the world bows to its gods of gold and silver; but it cannot take away at least the first day of the week; and widely as it is profaned even now by our selfishness, mingling with it as the sea forces its brackish flood backward into the pure river, yet our social life would be a hundred-fold more evil, save for this one day. Who can tell all its gifts? It is the voice of the sinless Christ, speaking amidst our daily cares, and bidding us rise again out of the grave of the world, as He rose

on the first day. The heart of Christian believers still repeats that noble hymn of the twelfth century :

Joy to the world ! fresh joy  
Is born in its new birth ;  
And with the Risen Lord  
Rises the earth !

All outward things are changed for awhile ; the warehouse is shut, the hard gripe of avarice is relaxed ; the father sits among his children, to enjoy the rest God has given to man ; the gates of the church are open, and rich and poor meet together to confess one Christ and one redemption. I know that there are other sides to this fair picture. I know and feel how much our fashionable Christianity enters into the church ; and how many of the poor are debarred from the worship which should be free as the grace of Christ. Yet, in spite of all this, I love to think of the vast multitudes who do taste these blessings ; the cottages as well as homes of wealth, all over the land, where are nursed a Christian faith and purity ; I love to think of the many noble men and women, who walk, like their Master, through the dark places of the city, teaching His word and doing His works of love. Who can reckon the power of this day, as the source of Christian education, as the giver of comfort to the ignorant

and needy, and as our own best season of a spiritual rest? The history of all that is best and purest in our Christianity is bound up with it.

And thus, my friends, shall our view of this holy season teach us the duty it brings, and the way in which we must keep its spirit. It is a day of social worship. Nor can it be less binding surely on the Christian, although we are not under the rigid statute of Israel, but far more so, if we feel in any sense the law of love to God and man. We must not forget the assembling of ourselves together; the dependence of our piety on the communion of the church. It is the day of our household religion. We hallow it as the sweet atmosphere in which grow all the graces of a Christian youth. It is the day severed from common tastes or amusements, and it should be the aim of every good man to look to it that it be kept with due honor in the world about us, for the best welfare of all. I hold that the state which recognizes the faith of Christ as that of the great body of its citizens, has not only the right, but the duty to close the shop, the drinking-saloon, the places of vicious amusement, as truly as to maintain any law for the social well-being. Are we so pure that we need no aid against the lawless greed and the vices that run

riot on this day of rest? Let not the name of Christian freedom be the cloak of license. I cannot here dwell on the special questions of our Sunday law, so much debated among us. Enough to say, that the law of Christ, "the Sabbath is made for man," should be the large principle of our legislation. That should teach us to hold up always the moral purpose of the statute. It should teach us always to cherish the cheerful heart of the Christian festival. We, too, have had our Sabbath formalism as well as the Pharisee of old time, and under its stern shadow the feast has been made a fast; its religious duties have been changed to task-work, and the most harmless social enjoyments forbidden. I do not and I cannot share the feeling of those who would enforce that spirit for fear of modern freedom: nay, I bid them ask how far the evil has been directly fostered by the austerities of the past. If our observance make us strict as the Jewish formalist, but forgetful that our religion is for every day of the week; more rigid about a Sunday walk than about our daily honesty or our charity, it will be no aid to social morals. We want the morality that shall purify the whole Christian life; the religion that shall prize this day, because it sweetens and uplifts our

common pursuits, because it reminds us that all our times, our callings are, while in the world, above the world. And therefore we choose neither the looseness of a continental Sunday, nor the copy of a Jewish Sabbath ; we keep it in the better spirit of our divine and loving Lord. We prize these still hours of refreshing for our own inward need ; but we must not forbid all pure social interchange ; we must not grudge to the laborer, pent in the factory or the narrow tenement, his taste of the sunshine ; to the clerk a quiet retreat in the reading-room or public library ; we must remember the thousands who cannot enter our comfortable churches, to whom the season is one of needed rest for body and soul. If in that spirit we maintain the festival ; if in our own Christian homes we join the higher pleasures with the affections of the heart, so that the child will hail it as the dearest day of all the week, and the man as his best restorer from the cares of daily life, we shall hallow it indeed.

Blessed be God for the holy gift ! Accept our thanksgiving, risen Redeemer, for the truth it reveals and the grace it bestows ! It shall never pass away, so long as the church of Christ adores the Lord of life ; it shall be always the first of



days, greater than that which typified to the Hebrew the work of creation, the token of His Resurrection, and of our life in Him ; its sacred morning shall call us to worship, its setting hours shall leave their benediction ; it shall be the day of our rest on earth, and the foretaste of the rest that remaineth for the people of God !

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## V.

## THE LAW OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

*"Honor thy father and thy mother ; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."*—  
EXOD. xx. 12.

*"Which is the first commandment with promise."*—EPHES.  
vi. 2.

WE open the second division of the Law with the duties of man to man ; and at its head stands the commandment of the household. I must repeat here the remark of eminent scholars, that each of the original tables probably contained five statutes ; and thus the maxim we now consider was directly joined with the four concerning the worship of God. Such a view gives us indeed a new insight into the Hebrew religion, which linked the first of social truths with a divine faith ; it is the anticipation of His Gospel, who has taught us that the love of parent and children is the type of our holier bond in the family of Christ. But there is a yet further thought in the words of this "commandment with promise." That "thy

days may be long in the land." Those earlier commandments tower above us like the lonely heights, where Moses communed with God ; but as we read this sentence, we see rise on the eyes of the lawgiver the landscape of far Judea, with its laughing fields, the voice of children and the home of calm old age. These words suggest the whole line of our reasoning on this subject. Filial reverence is the fountain of all affections, all duties ; it flows like the river of Eden, parted into its branching heads, through every channel of human life.

It is then the family, as the institution which God has implanted in our nature, and Christianity has hallowed, that we are to consider. I know indeed no richer study than thus to trace its growth. I have no theories to offer you. It is the simplest of facts. There has been no more favorite field for our philosophers than that of the origin of human government. Some have fancied that men met together in formal compact ; others have held the state of nature that of a pack of wolves, at last brought together by self-interest to choose some kingly wolf, who could keep the peace ; and we have to-day our sages, so enamored of their researches into comparative anatomy, that they can pass by all the nobler facts of social

history, and find the primitive man in some anthropoid ape. Yet as the grandest laws of God are revealed in the nearest example, we learn more than volumes of such theory in the life of our own households. Government began with the family. It is no artificial thing. It was not imposed by force. There is no state of nature that goes before it ; but as all our discoveries in organic life lead to the primary cell, so all social formations are only the enlargement of this little human embryo. We need no other truth than that He, who gave us this moral being, made us to dwell in mutual dependence ; and thus the germ of all authority lies in the relation of parent and child, in the care it calls forth, in the weakness of infancy, and the natural reverence that springs from the heart. Open the Book of the Genesis ; you see the patriarch Abraham dwelling in the tent with his children ; you see this household passing into tribes, linked in a bond of brotherhood, reverencing the father of them all, who is priest and head ; and you trace further on a Mosaic Commonwealth. History repeats the same early chapter in the Arab of the desert to-day, or in the beginnings of ancient Rome. "Society in primitive times," it is said by one of the wisest of English jurists, in his work on Ancient Law, "was not a collection

of individuals ; it was an aggregation of families." Among all early peoples the law of the household is thus supreme ; it embraces all duties, and reaches to the nicest detail of courtesy. The oldest laws of China are as rich in their family wisdom as any in the world. Filial reverence was the corner-stone of the state. I well remember with what surprise I saw the son of a venerable Parsee, himself a man of fifty, wait behind his father's chair during a long interview ; it was a vestige of the stately manners of the East, strangely contrasting with our civilized rudeness. But if we will find the finest examples in the past, we must turn to those scenes in the Old Testament, where the aged patriarch lays his hands on his eldest born in token of his birth-right, or the twelve gather reverently about the bed of the dying Jacob to receive his blessing. In this household life, interwoven with all their social habits, the heart of the Hebrew was nursed ; and in many a quiet home, like that of Nazareth, there grew the blossoming graces of childhood, that made this history so pure amidst all its decays.

But we must pass from this earlier view to the new life of Christianity, if we would know its nobler influence. Many pure affections and vir-

tues grew without doubt in a heathen civilization. But the family authority was almost a despotism ; the father had power of life and death over the child, and woman was little more than a slave. The one great feature of all social progress, we are told by the jurist already cited, has been the recognition of the rights of the person, instead of absolute family dependence. Here it was that the religion of the Gospel had its living power, and I ask you to study this wonderful fact in its early history. As we look back on the state of society at that time, we are struck everywhere with the decay of those fair examples of chastity, of maternal virtue, of household strength which bloomed in the old Roman commonwealth. Family life had withered, because it had not in its ancient Pagan form those elements which could preserve its influence amidst the shameless sensuality of the world. The public talk of the forum, the theatre, the games, the busy out-of-door existence, such as you see to-day in Southern Europe, were everything ; nor was there a purer tide flowing into the great city, as from the country-homes of England and America, to cleanse and freshen it. Religion was a brilliant temple pageantry. Thus, as in all Pagan lands, you have the same striking facts ; the degradation

of woman, and the degradation of man with it. This it was that the religion of Christ changed. It taught, as its first truth, that God was our Father, and all men one brotherhood in Christ. What a revelation was this beyond all that the Pagan mind had known! The paternal power was no longer a despotism to the believer; the father knew that he had a Father in heaven, and that his child was no serf, but the household tie was a type of the holier family of God. Read that clear utterance of the household law in St. Paul: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." The Gospel cherished above all else the family authority; yet it hallowed, sweetened, enlarged it. It nursed the virtues of the household. It made woman the companion of the heart and home; it hallowed marriage; it taught the love of Christ and the brethren, contentment, industry, frugality, sacrifice, and charity to the poor. What picture so fair as in the letters of that time of its fresh, healthful life; that "church in the house," breathing the soul of the early religion? The kingdom came without observation, without noise; and a new home-born, home-bred society grew in the midst of the dying civilization.

In this light, then, we can understand, brethren,

the place of the Christian family, as always the first of social institutions. Such is the view I wish to urge, because I believe that, far more than we suppose, this law of the family enters into the most real questions of our time as to popular education or social reform. We live in a day of theories ; and in such a day we are most apt to forget the simple truths, which, in Coleridge's words, "are so true, that they lie bed-ridden by the side of the most exploded errors." I speak no mere sentiment ; I address myself to the plain sense and Christian experience of all. It is the problem that presses on us to-day more than ever, when we look at the mingled good and evil of our modern world ; when we enter one of our great cities, where wealth glitters as if there were no suffering, yet a step apart there lurks a world of beggary and crime, which our Christianity has hardly pierced, although it has sent a Livingston into the heart of Africa ;—what is the hope of Christian more than Pagan progress, of a Paris or New York more than a Rome ? I give the answer, which I think all history as well as the Gospel gives. The purity of the household is the salt of our civilization. I know no other answer. Need I then, state the ground on which such a truth



rests? The only lasting influence which can preserve or heal the social body is one that works from the root. We cannot, with dreamers like Rousseau, believe the savage better than the civilized state. Art and science bring manifold vices with the good, yet we can never grapple with the sins of our day by vague railing against luxury. In the decaying age of the Roman world a Jerome retired into his cave at Bethlehem; but his idle despair did not cure the evil. We often indulge the same false humor. We speak of a London or a New York as the swollen ulcer of society, but we forget that we may as well talk of a body without its brain; that it is in mutual circulation, the country feeding the city with fresh blood, the city pouring it back enriched in its double circuit, the life is maintained; and thus while we see the vices, we should see also the enlarged activities, the myriad callings for the poor, the treasures of art and culture for all, the uncounted charities walking in every haunt of sorrow or sin. But this growth of civilization has in it no self-preserving might. A refined culture is no safeguard against our moral diseases. We repeat often that this American people is abler to keep its freedom and virtue, because of the education of all; yet it is one of

those surface truths that may cover a fallacy. I believe heartily in popular education. But there is a more knowing vice as well as virtue. The mob of Paris is more intelligent than the country boor; but it is a witty and polished animal. Such training, without a deeper root, only quickens the weeds in the rank field of our time, and chokes the public conscience.

Whatever, then, the form of our civilization, it must depend on the tone of our household life for its healthy growth, because this precedes all else in its shaping power. All the germs of personal character, truth, purity, honesty, reverence of law must be implanted in this soil. The state rests on it. The church rests on it, and its teaching is barren, unless it begin with home nurture. We may make what laws we will for the suppression of vice, what plans we will of education, what better methods of industry; but what are they without the education of the character? What is our most perfect theory of government, unless there be a self-governed people? What are commercial rules, if there be no conscience of integrity and honor? Study this truth in its widest bearings. Our time is marked by its noble efforts for reform. We hail each healthy improvement in the condition of the poor, the opening of new channels

of labor, the breaking down of false monopolies. But with it we see too often a disposition to some social theory, from a St. Simon to our latest dreamers, who would derange the natural, organic methods of life. I cannot name a better example than the movement on behalf of what are called the rights of woman. Most heartily do I recognize the fact, that it springs from a growth in society itself, which demands the reform of some unjust laws, and the enlargement of her education ; but when its advocates forget the divine law, which no theories can change, and so would make culture or calling identical for both sexes, nature laughs at them. No effort can succeed, unless it make the woman of to-day more fitted to her place in that Christian home, on which all moral health depends. Weigh any of our pressing questions in this one scale. So long as the social diseases are the same at the heart and the sources of social cure begin at the heart, I have no faith that any of our machinery will change the order, prearranged by Him who made the nature of man and fitted it to his life.

It is thus, my friends, we are to learn the bearing of such a truth on our own land and time. We cannot study the growth of society, especially

in our great cities, without observing that there are many influences, such as I have already described in the old Pagan civilization, which tend to impair the purity of home. The family habits decay in the larger world of sensual splendor. It is becoming a hard thing for our young men of fashion to afford the luxury of marriage ; and our young women learn that the aim of life is a rich husband, who can supply the gold for the wardrobe and the glitter of an establishment. We have imported from abroad within these few years many of the loose ideas of modern Epicurism. But there are, besides, influences peculiar to our American society, which are developing a type of precocious youth not pleasant to look upon. I know not whether it be the abuse of our free institutions, that begets our style of manners : but we are too fast losing the habits of home authority and filial reverence. It has been truly said of us, that we have as much family government as ever, but the young govern the parents. We have no children now-a-days. Our infants leap from the nursery into the drawing-room ; and while abroad a son or a daughter has hardly left the retreat of home, here they are already veterans in the ways of fashion, and society is quite surrendered to them. Many of our foreign

visitors have repeated the remark of De Tocqueville, that an American girl has more of self-poised ease, but is wanting in the fresh charm seen so often in the young maidens of England or France. I doubt not there is a better side to this. I would not keep them, as is too often done abroad, shut in nursery or convent without the education of the character. I love the intelligence, the generous freedom of youth, but I wish we might not lose with these the modest heart, the simple tastes of past years. It may be the passing excess of our national childhood, but it is not to be flattered as it is too often. I know that I am very old-fashioned in my ideas, yet it may be well if we soberly reflect on these things. We may grow in wealth and all the arts of social culture, but let these fast habits of the time, this whirl of our modern life eat into the heart of our home piety, and the whole body must die of its own gangrenes.

In that conviction I urge on you, my friends, your personal obligation. Who of us can enough appreciate its meaning? Who of us, if he could keep afresh the feeling of awe and tenderness with which he looked on the face of his first-born infant, and felt what an undiscovered world was opened to him, who would ever need to learn his duty? What a work it is, how ceaseless, how grow-

ing at each step, how delicate in all its adaptations, how asking all our love, our thoughtfulness, our patience ! I offer you no system of education. I repeat only the principle, which I thank God is the root of all teaching in our own church, that a Christian godliness is the growth of the whole character ; and therefore it begins with the recognition of the child as a new-born member of the family of Christ ; it makes religion no unnatural experience, but plants its simplest truths in the moral affections, and blends them with the real duties of life. This is sound sense and piety. This, in Wordsworth's happy line, is

Pure religion breathing household laws.

Give your offspring this training of the character ; teach them to be frank and open-hearted, to hate a lie or a mean action, to be kind to the poor, to protect the weaker, to respect gray hairs, to reverence your authority from love not fear, to cherish the natural pleasures and employments of home, a book or a ramble more than the finery of modish children, young or old ; above all to be always constant in their Christian habits, with no affectations of a premature piety, with a child's faults, but a child's sweet faith ; give them, I say, this training,

if you will have them men and women indeed. No other teaching can nurse the conscience and the heart. No hot-house processes can take the place of sunshine and natural soil. No schooling can avail, when the child has not at home the school of wisdom and of piety. We send our sons and daughters to refined masters, we have them disciplined in their languages, their philosophies, and it is well ; but without this deeper training it will only feed the brain ; or worse, bestow a thinggilding, a little French, a little music, and an elegant emptiness. But this education of the character that comes by no exact system, but from the unconscious teachings of home, from the conversation of the table, the tasks and sports, the look and manner of parents, the high or sordid tone of all around us ; this education, intertwined with the roots of childhood, growing from the stem into leaf and blossom by the hidden powers of the moral nature ; this education of the conscience, of loyalty to truth, of honor, of chastity, of deference to kind authority, of boyish strength and sisterly tenderness, what is there that can so sink into the plastic mind or keep so lasting a hold on our social manhood ! It is no despotism I mean by household law. A child cannot be drilled

into mechanical habits of piety or knowledge. We do not rear an oak by girding it with iron bands. Nor are we, for fear of the world, to nurse a soft, effeminate spirit. The boy is not always an infant ; he must be treated as one who has the rights of a growing manhood, and needs intellectual and moral muscle for active life. But we must exercise the authority of love ; make home not a prison but a delight ; enter ourselves into the child's feelings, study each disposition, and guide the generous stream in the channels of true habit. Above all, we must remember that our own characters are the great teachers. You will hope in vain to see your son grow up with lofty purposes of life, if he see his father a slave of Mammon ; you will send your daughter in vain to accomplished masters, if she hear from her mother that the chief end of a woman's existence is dress and fashionable idleness. You can never teach the keen-eyed boy to speak truth, and then act a social lie before his face without discovery. It was a keen saying of the Roman satirist ; *maxima debetur puero reverentia* ; "we ought to revere the child most highly." We should recognize in him the nature we are to shape by our pure example ; and if we will teach him rev-



erence, we must reverence the laws of conscience and of God. This is the commandment with promise. It is no poor sentiment. It is the reality we have seen in the noblest characters, that adorn our social life; and not a few of us have reason to thank God that we have found our faith in his law a life-long happiness. Blessed, thrice blessed these remembrances! Come back, come back, past but forgotten childhood! and bring the sunshine of those faces, the music of those voices we have loved; the joys and cares, the simple tasks, the sports of the playground, the interchange of fresh hearts, the whispers of a mother's prayer that went up for us to God, the holy counsels that have gone with us as angels in the trials of after years; all that made life happy, that neither age nor the decays of the world can ever take away!

In this faith, then, my friends, let us keep inviolate the household law. I have striven to enforce it above all in those relations, so needful for us in a time when we are busy with many theories of education, and when it seems to me we are losing far too often our hold of such simple precepts. And I would it could thus be impressed on the mind and heart of our American people. I would that our generation might learn,

amidst the din of our political and social world, this truth which was spoken of old, and runs through the history of all Christian civilization, that the life of every nation keeps pace with the purity of the family. We have inherited our faith in this statute. We turn to the land of our fathers, and find the secret of her strength not in her wealth or national power, but in those English homes, that have nursed in every time the men who made her wise and pure ; her Evelyns in the profligate day of Charles, her Burkes who built the state on the laws of God, her Havelocks who revered him in the camp ; we owe the virtue that to-day upholds our republic to those Puritans, who with all their stern theology kept the household life as a moss rose in its envelope, and bequeathed it to us their children. Let us guard it as our best heirloom from the past. Let us remember that in a land like ours of free institutions, our only trust lies in the education that begins with the personal conscience. I leave it here for your earnest reflection. I rejoice that amidst our growing luxury we yet have on every side such Christian homes. I rejoice, while we feel the pulses of the great city beating at fever-heat, that the heart is sound ; and so long as our American Paris is not America, but a healthy

stream of country life pours in to freshen us ; so long as we have our men of wealth, who prize the old-fashioned simplicity, our men of culture, who retain their " plain-living and high-thinking ;" so long as we have amidst this world of fashion an inner world of love and purity, I am sure that we have the best hope for the years to come. I care little who may brawl or bribe in Congress, if we keep this legislation of the fireside. Happy for us, my friends, if we remember it for ourselves and those whom God has given to our trust ! Happy the land which has this health and wealth indeed ; which has not lost the faith, that created whatever is strong in the national character—this abiding faith in the household law of God !

## VI.

## THE LAW OF SOCIAL LOVE.

*Thou shalt do no murder.*—EXOD. xx. 13.

*Whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*—ST. MATT. v. 22.

THE history of mankind is the commentary on this early law. Its first page after the loss of Paradise opens with the death of Abel; its first poetry is the song of Lamech, which follows the story of the new-found art in brass and iron, and sounds like a sad dirge over the invention of weapons.

“I have slain a man to my wounding,  
And a young man to my hurt :  
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,  
Truly Lamech seventy and seven.”

Each age to our own repeats the same dark fact,  
and the world is still a field of blood.

It is my purpose to handle this law chiefly in the moral relations, which the teaching of Christ enforces. Yet as there are some weighty questions, that perplex the conscience of many as to the right of society in the punishment of the crime, I shall begin our inquiry with the principle of the statute. Human life is the gift of the Almighty, which man cannot bestow, and must not take away at his pleasure. It is the highest right vested in the person, and its violation is not only a crime against the victim, but against society itself. And therefore the instinct of the moral nature echoes the sentence : "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed ;" it demands that the sternest sanction shall be given to a law that guards the very existence of mankind. Yet it is a proof of the marvellous wisdom of the Mosaic code, that in so primitive a time it could utter this command. No law is slower of growth. War is not indeed the state of nature ; nor is man, as some naturalists claim, a beast of prey, who obeyed the same instinct as the wolf or the shark. Such philosophy cannot explain how he could emerge at all from the rule of teeth and claws into civilization. But in the rude infancy of mankind the ideas of social order are pushed aside by

the selfish passions. 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth' is the first notion of justice. We have in the Hebrew cities of refuge traces of that custom of the "avenger of blood," which lingers still even in Greece and Sicily. Personal vengeance is an admitted right among all barbarous peoples : and while many, like the ancient Germans, had rigid penalties against impurity, the homicide paid only a small fine. The sense of the sacredness of life is the fruit of a riper time. Even with our boasted advancement it is not long since the duel, the last absurdity of feudalism, has begun to be recognized as crime. Society, then, takes its great step toward civilization when it reaffirms this statute of God, and substitutes law for what Bacon calls the "wild justice" of revenge.

But we have at this day some who urge this very principle of the sacredness of human life against law, and claim that capital punishment is only a legal murder. I doubt not, that a Christian humanity, ever since the effort of wise men like Beccaria, has done much to redeem our legislation from the barbarity that punished light offences with the gallows ; and it may be, as we advance, that the death penalty for murder may prove less effective than other means. But I

cannot grant that there is any moral wrong in it. Human life is sacred, but not so sacred as the ends for which it is given. We surrender it for the life of home and country ; and therefore justice has the right to take it, because the being of society is of more worth than that of any individual man. It can never renounce that right, if it be needed for self-preservation. It affirms it in the case of war. It cannot be denied unless we claim absolute personal freedom. Nor is the plea of humanity a sufficient answer. We may well doubt whether the plausible argument that "a man can be put to no worse use than hanging," be true in every case. We may modify the law, we may reserve such penalties for rare and terrible guilt ; but if our humanity be severed from our social duty, it becomes cruelty to the victims of crime. Justice itself, in taking life for life, appeals to the conscience that "it bears not the sword of God in vain ;" it gives an impartial hearing ; it arrays itself in the solemn pomp of the tribunal to show that it acts in no wrath or wantonness ; it shudders at its own responsibility ; it speaks the verdict with pity ; and when it strikes, it surrounds even the scaffold with the last kindly offices of religion.

We may thus pass from our view of social law

to the deeper truth given us in the sentence of Jesus Christ. What has the divine Lawgiver stated as the essence of the commandment? It is that the sin of murder lies in the motive. Anger, hatred, unkindly feeling toward our fellow-man has in it the capacity and the guilt of the outward deed. It may seem to you an abstract notion of morality, but a study of the Pharisaic code of that time will give you the best insight into the principle. There were in the Hebrew judicial system several courts, the lower of which were called those of judgment; but above them all was the council, the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. The crime of murder was adjudged among the offences brought before these minor courts; and such had become the indifference of the Jew to justice, that no people was more given to personal revenge, no sin more easily passed by under the mask of law itself. Our Lord then tells them that hatred is the transgression of this law, and He defines it in three degrees. Unjust anger is worthy of the sentence of the court of judgment; the word of scorn, *Raca*, deserves the penalty of the council, the highest earthly law; but to say, "Thou fool," brings peril of a punishment beyond these, even the fire of God.



It is difficult to convey the exact difference between these last two phrases which Christ rebukes : but as the penalty awarded is so much greater for the third, it signifies doubtless a deeper degree of moral wrong. We have, then, a clear meaning, when we distinguish between the sin of selfish scorn, and that of malignant passion. Now here, I say, is not only a moral idea for the Christian conscience, but the statute of the Gospel conveys the real purpose of law itself. It is true, that the penalties of human justice must be confined to outward acts, because its aim is only to protect life; and thus it cannot reach the motive, save as it appears in the form of open crime. Yet so far as it can, it strives after this personal discrimination. The mere act of taking life does not constitute murder in the eye of the law, but the design. Nothing more clearly shows its spirit, than the nice precision with which it weighs the character and hue of every deed. It acquits the undesigned homicide ; or him who is forced to kill another in an assault on his own life. Yet even here we find, not only in later time but in the Hebrew code and that of the twelve tables, such value set on the moral principle, that defence is not allowed to the last extremity against the robber except at night

time, or when there can be no legal protection from his violence. Law defines still further the degrees of guilt. Manslaughter in a moment of passion is not liable like a deed done with malice aforethought ; but if there be lapse of time for the blood to cool, it becomes deliberate revenge. Law distinguishes the shades of provocation ; it does not confound a blind resentment with the plots of a cautious villany. This morality, then, which justice aims at and reaches so far as it can within the limits of its sphere, the statute of Christ carries to its fullest meaning. It searches not only the heart in the act, but the heart itself. Human law protects life ; Christ's law will preserve love. Human law will punish violence ; Christ's law will root out the selfishness that creates violence, and to that extent it declares its precept. It is a fearful sentence. The sternest judgments of a human tribunal seem mild, compared with the words of our Lord ; yet those words are written in clear characters on every conscience, and confirmed in the evidence of life.

If it be true, then, that such should be our judgment of the crime, the first and most weighty view is to study the connection between the social passions and the deeds of wrong. It is a dark

chapter of human biography we open, my friends, and God grant we may read it truly! As we look at this sin of murder, it seems to stand out alone, the masterwork of depravity. No good man ever took the life of another in self-defence, or even by accident, without a regret almost as keen as remorse. Yet who that knows mankind, does not see that the crime is the natural fruit of manifold vices in the world around us? Who does not wonder, when some startling tragedy reveals the foul passions seething not only in the dens, but the quiet houses of the great city, that the caldron does not boil more often above the brim? Here and there the murderer is a dull brute, or an incarnate fiend who has no more conscience than the wolf of the forest; but it is usually the undesigned result of passion, or of a life grown reckless in debauchery. You look on such a being as if he were an outlaw from humanity, as if an impassable gulf yawned between his moral nature and your own. Yet, had it been your lot, as it is sometimes that of the Christian minister, to enter the cell, and talk with the heart of the criminal, you would read a moral history no police report has brought to light; you would see in that sullen, manacled form, one who like you was once an infant in a

Christian home, or if the child of ignorance and sin, worthier of your pity. There has been a season when he would have shuddered at the thought of such a crime ; but it lies far back now, in the almost forgotten past ; years of lawless passion, of vile companionship have hardened into character, until at last there came the moment of madness, and he plunged into death. Yet even now he is not a monster, but a man ; and when you touch some chord in that broken conscience, when he feels that you too are a man and not only a judge, he starts with horror at his own dark history. I have known such mysteries of life in more than one personal study. And is there any of us who does not read in the revelations of his own heart the lesson it gives him of the capacity of the passions ? Is there one who does not feel what temptation might have made him, had not a kind Providence and a Christian home shielded him from evil ? We may not lay the blame of social sins on circumstance, but we must learn the need of that self-discipline which curbs the strong desires, before they ripen into vicious habit. Anger has been called a brief madness, but any of the selfish passions, the lust of gold, the lust of power, may become a madness that blinds the conscience to all moral

results. Nay, the history of the past shows us that this crime has by no means been the sin of the ignorant or brutal alone. None of us will ever forget the case of a scholar in our first university, who, pressed with debt and goaded by hate, butchered his creditor in his laboratory with a hardihood unmatched in the very dens of guilt. Society shuddered to know that intellectual culture is no shield against the worst corruption of the heart.

But here we reach the deeper view of this truth. If the open crime be only the fruit of the passions, and if the guilt lie in the motive as well as the deed, there may be a violation of this law that can escape the keenest scent of justice, and be practised in the very face of society itself. I enter here on a topic that may seem to some minds an exaggeration of the moral sentiments. It may be said that to confound criminal acts with motives, is to lose all sober estimate of wrong. We must define our meaning carefully. This law of Christ does not affirm that a passing impulse of anger has the guilt of homicide; nor that in the eye of justice all acts of inhumanity should be classed in the same list with murder. Law rightly divides between the quality of crimes against the person, and against property

or reputation. But we mean that, in the view of a just morality, there are sins as deadly in their intrinsic evil as murder, and which often end in worse crime than the death of the body. Is it not the most shallow ignorance that forgets this truth? I turn again in this light to the New Testament. I shall give no stricter teaching than that of the divine Master, but consider those several classes of sin which he has rebuked in his own solemn words.

Shall we pass in review the vices of selfish inhumanity? It is a long, sad catalogue. I might turn to the violation of this divine law in the history of war. The civilized world has reached a higher sense of its evil than in former times; yet even now there seems no other definition of international law than that of a modern diplomatist, "the right of the shark to eat up the smaller fry of the waters." I do not take the ground of non-resistance. War may be a just, a sacred necessity. Religion cannot annul the right of self-defence; nay, it is a curious fact, that the Hebrew word "kill" in this commandment is not used to express slaying in battle, or the just penalty inflicted by human or divine law. But when I ask what is the proportion of just wars to unjust, what inhuman

passions have always defiled the noblest cause ; when I recall in our own generation four of these terrible scourges, one at home for the support of human slavery, and the last from the folly of a dynasty which would engulf Europe to sustain its waning power, I believe that the conscience of Christian men should awaken more fully not only to its evils, but its moral guilt. Yet we need not single these grander instances of wrong. Artillery and bayonets are only the instruments of our selfishness. "The lusts that war in our members" are the destroyers we must seek in the heart of man. It is one of the sad features of an artificial civilization that it leads too often to the same indifference to life that marks the savage. We have been told by those who study the statistics of human wretchedness, that the number of sufferers in a few years by the ordinary causes of poverty and neglect is greater than that of the most frightful war. Consider the large class in every community, who are the victims of our sensual vices, ruined and left to die by those who move in the upper ranks of society. We need not go into prisons, but in homes once virtuous and happy we may find tragedies sadder than we ever read of, acted in secret and ended in death. Not long ago, we were appalled

by an infanticide committed by a young half-crazed mother ; yet who that had a heart, did not feel that the murder lay at the door of the gay libertine, whom the law could not touch ? Is this an extraordinary example ? Yet society seldom calls such sins murder, and often welcomes the fashionable gentleman, whose calling is this of a beast of prey, into its refined circle. Ask again, how many victims there are of the selfish trade which pays no heed to the physical health of the workman or workwoman. What a chapter it is of unpardonable wrong ! Each day we hear of crowded tenements that breed disease ; of mills that crush their hundreds, because the greed of the owners would not spare a few thousands to build them securely ; of factories, where no watchful law has preserved the weak child from work ruinous to mind and body. These are murders society does not love to know. What does the fashionable woman think of the poor seamstress, whose tired fingers finished the embroidery for the last night's ball, as she gives her the small pittance ? What do we heed the real wrongs of thousands against whom we jostle in our whirl of business or pleasure ? We forget them, as we do the daily news of some train that has been dashed to



pieces by the wicked carelessness of an engineer ; some Ville de Havre that has gone down with its freight of human souls ; we shudder, and to-morrow we embark again. We wake up in good earnest when there comes a rising among the workingmen ; but while we complain, and often justly, that they too will tyrannize over their masters, we forget that there is a mutual responsibility we cannot escape. Christianity teaches no false levelling, but it teaches that social order is builded on the basis of social love. The law of Jesus Christ is no respecter of persons. It sees no difference between the vulgar cutthroat and the conqueror, who has sacrificed thousands on the altar of his ambition. It sees no difference between the trader in human flesh, and him who builds a fortune on the miseries of his fellow-men. In the eye of God they are the same. Nay, I mistake, they are not the same. The lust of selfish men has murdered more than all criminal reports can furnish ; and great as are their responsibilities beyond the ignorant and brutish, shall be their award. "The mighty," says Bossuet in that noble discourse on Providence he dared preach before the luxurious court of Louis, "the mighty shall keep a hapless pre-eminence of pain, to which they shall be hurled

down from the pre-eminence of their glory." Yes, it is a commandment for us all, that reaches to the heart of our social duty. Whoever asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?" must remember that it was the question of Cain ; whoever in his ease or indifference forgets this law of love, must know that it is no trivial sin.

But I pass to the next and darker class of the malignant passions, which our Lord has singled as worthy of divine justice. Can I number them ? The "commandment is exceeding broad ;" it includes vindictiveness, envy, malice, harsh prejudice, false judgment. We call them vices, but we seldom think of them as deadly sins ; yet if we soberly ask how many are the examples in which they cause a moral death, we might change our reckoning. Turn to this sin of vindictiveness, as you witness it every day in our social experience. It is not by the vulgar acts of the assassin a man of refined malice needs to work ; nay, he can convey death in a way that puts an accomplished Borgia in the shade, with his perfumed gloves and drugged wine. There are things more sacred than the life of the body—honor, character, the peace of those we love ; and a brave man will open his veins gladly in defence of these. A reputable person hates his rival in business or so-

cial honors ; he shuns all open warfare, but he will kill his character ; day on day he poisons the confidence of the circle in which he moves ; in public he speaks words of courtesy, behind he follows with the doubling of the hound ; his victim writhes under the touch of an unseen enemy ; friends fall off, and he is left a broken wreck. Are these murders rare ? Or consider the sin of envy, and ask how many, since Ahab coveted Naboth's field, have been its victims in high and low places ; what fiendish arts it can use to ruin fortune or good name ; with what a devouring fire it can consume every vestige of honor or pity in the breast of him, who has an end to win in the social race. Are these murders rare ? No ugly spot of blood tells the tragedy. No law touches the murderer of the reputation ; but one such wrong is of as deep a dye in the eye of conscience as open crime. Pass thus in review the malignant passions, as they appear in all their shades of cold-blooded craft, of unscrupulous ambition, of cruel falsehood. Who can reckon them ? There is not a calling, not a political party, not a commercial rivalry, where such deeds are not committed. What numbers who have only risen to greatness on the ruins of those who stood in their path ! How many in the highest

places of honor are guiltier than the felon who pays the penalty of the law ! But alas ! I must not hide a sadder example. That judgment of Christ is as severe on many who wear the name of His religion. Was the sin of Caiaphas less than that of Barabbas ? Yet his priestly conscience felt no twinge, when he pronounced it expedient that one guiltless man should die for the safety of his order. And has not blind zeal consecrated too often the same crime ? Merciful God ! what a commentary on the Gospels, that the church of the meek Christ should have defended His cause by the same passions that crucified Him ; that the page of Christian history should be bloodier than that of Pagan persecution ; that centuries were needed before either a Roman or Protestant faith learned the earliest lesson of the Master ! In one age even a good Augustin teaches that errorists may be punished in mercy to their own souls, and the sophism sanctions all the cruelties that follow. In one reign Cranmer signs the death-warrant of Jean Boucher, and in the next is led himself to the stake. That religion of the fagot and the rack is past. We thank God for it. Yet the heart of man remains, and it has not yet learned that a divine truth needs no weapons

save wisdom and love. The Sanhedrin is still in secret session ; Caiaphas presides over the conclave ; sectarian hate and blind prejudice condemn the innocent blood ; and the Redeemer looks down with sad eyes on His followers, and says, " Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

But I close here the long exposition. If it have taught us to read our hearts more truly in His sight, who judges not by the appearance, to fathom our hidden motives and know our perils, it will be a healthful lesson. If I have seemed to enforce it too sternly, I have said no more than the Divine Master, who interprets it with a clearness none can gainsay. This is the law of God. Is there a man who doubts its reality ? Is there one who believes that there shall be no future, to adjust this confused problem of the world ? Strange blindness ! The law is here and now : it tries the wisdom of our lower courts, and reverses often their verdict. It rewrites many a character ; it unearths many a crime out of the grave of years. That law declares a moral order, and the partial fulfilments of the present are the proofs of the future. That perfect year of God shall come ; and when all shall be summoned before the supreme tribunal, when the earth and the sea, the prisons

and the nameless graves shall give up their dead ; when the judge and the felon, the monarch and the outlaw, the high priest and the martyr, the selfish oppressors and their victims shall stand side by side, then shall the book of the private heart and of that public falsehood we call history be opened together ; no glozing tongues shall hide the truth ; but their own evil passions, their own unloving deeds shall be at once their witness and their self-spoken doom. Almighty God, grant us to escape that scrutiny ! to read our lives in the light of that law which judgeth the heart !

## VII.

## THE LAW OF SOCIAL PURITY.

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*—EXOD. XX. 14.

*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness : all these come from within, and defile the man.*—ST. MARK vii. 21-23.

THE commandment of the Lord is pure to the pure. It becomes the minister of Christ to speak His truth without fear of men ; and I could do no worse offence against not only the Word of God, but the purity of all who hear me, if I should suppose by my silence that you have no interest in duties the most sacred to the human heart, or in evils among the gravest that eat into the social health. In that conviction I approach this subject ; and I beg each Christian mind to listen, as in His presence, “who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”

I shall speak of the ground of this divine com-

mand in the conscience of mankind, as the cornerstone of social order. Not one among all natural laws can claim to be so widely received; and even the barbarian who kills and steals at his pleasure, has guarded the purity of the family. Our Maker has written here his witness of the essential difference between man and beast. Although I by no means accept those ideal pictures of savage life drawn by our romancers, yet the effort of some late writers to prove our primitive state one of brutish instincts, from the habits of a few degraded tribes, is far more false to history. Indeed, it is the sad truth, as we well know in the decay of our Indian races, that civilized vice has beyond all else depraved the morals of the savage. As we look, indeed, at the early history of the past, it may seem that the custom of polygamy shows the want of any deep moral sentiment. But we must remember that polygamy, like slavery, was to a great degree the natural condition of family life, in times when the personal right of woman was little felt, and her weakness was often better protected under the guardianship of one strong arm. In the tent of Abraham, this primitive state was consistent with the affections and happiness of the household. But a Utah to-day is a monstrous blasphemy against the



spirit of a Christian civilization. Our Lord, when He said to the Jewish casuists, that "in the beginning God made them twain," stated the law planted in the social nature, and verified in its growth from barbarism by all history. Polygamy and slavery had both almost disappeared from Judea before his day ; and we may learn the conviction of wise men among the Hebrews from an ingenious gloss of Philo on the story of Eden, where he says : "It is written, the woman thou gavest to be *with* me, not gavest *to* me ; none of his goods or servants, but partner and companion." Nor is it less true of Gentile progress. The later Roman code defined marriage as the "partnership of the whole life ; the participation of rights human and divine." Yet while no age has been without reverence for this law, the ancient world never reached that standard of purity, which with all our vices we recognize as our social faith. Its culture could not curb its profligacy. It was Christianity alone that at once emancipated woman, yet established a public and private morality that changed the whole character of the time. Where was its power ? It has one simple answer. It planted itself directly in the social conscience. Marriage was no longer a slavery or a mere

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legal contract ; it was sanctioned by religion. All that woman has to-day, as the flower of our civilization, all her power in the nurture of her household, in the sphere of social influence, the ministry of refined tastes, of gentle manners, and the holier graces of charity,—all is the gift of Christ's religion. The purity of modern sentiment has grown out of the model of the New Testament.

We reach here our view of the principle of Christian ethics on this subject. It is in the sermon on the Mount that our Lord laid down his law. He recognized marriage as a divinely created order, and declared that to sever it save for adultery was itself the same crime. That law passed into the life of the church. Marriage was the image of the unity of the Lord with his body ; the most sacred of bonds. That law passed into the life of Europe ; it had to struggle with the vices of a barbarian age ; it could not overcome all the licentiousness of court or camp ; but it did succeed as no other religion has done. There is no instance, it has been said by a great jurist, in which so marked and lasting a change in the whole moral habit of man has been wrought as in the law of divorce, which to this day, in Protestant Eng-

land as well as the continent, has kept its hold on the social reverence. I touch at this point a question, which deeply affects the moral interests of our time and land. I shall seek to interpret the sentence of Christ in its true spirit. The Hebrew casuists had pushed to great abuse the admission of the Mosaic code, that "a man could put away his wife, if she found no favor in his eyes," until divorce had become as shamefully common as in some of our western States. Even the school of the wise Hillel thought it justified, if the food was not well cooked for the table; and the more rigid school of Shammai had naught to say of any moral transgressions in the man. Christ rebuked the wrong as alike for either sex. He tells them it had been allowed for "hardness of heart;" the tyrannous liberty of a rude time, when womanly right was not yet recognized. It has been said that no absolute sense is to be given to such words, but they are to be taken as urged against the scandalous habit of the time. Undoubtedly so; but their essentially moral meaning, as based on the sacred character of the bond, cannot be changed. This tells us the true spirit of our social legislation. We need not defend the excess of ecclesiastical law. It has been urged that in Europe it has led to

much of the vice it would restrain, has made family discords incurable, and encouraged those unlawful unions so common in the higher as well as lower classes. There is much truth in this. But we have other dangers to contend with in our land. Marriage with us must be always in the eye of the law a civil contract ; and no church can enforce its canon on the state. It is therefore our freedom should be a reason of twofold weight for the moral feeling, which must guard the bond with reverence. There are cases, without doubt, where separation may be justly claimed by a wife, whose life is made a curse by vice or tyranny ; and none should deny to such the protection of the law. But let the freedom of divorce be easily granted, and the securities of household purity, the very name of home must perish. I urge this on all Christian citizens as of vital meaning. It is only the lasting character of the bond, that can prevent a thoughtless marriage, and compel that mutual forbearance, without which it cannot survive. There will be more unhappy unions than ever, if the most solemn of ties can be snapped at will ; and the suffering will fall chiefly on woman, who is always the sufferer in the unequal strife. And therefore we should dread worse than a pesti-

lence the looseness, which in some parts of our land has made marriage almost a mockery ; we had rather bear the imperfections of the social state, than choose a remedy that ends in death.

But I pass to the deeper social truth, which the religion of Christ enforces. Our Lord, then, in His sermon on the Mount, not only rebuked the legal abuse of divorce, but struck at the root of sin in the undisciplined passions. Impurity begins with the heart, out of which all evil thoughts come and defile the man. We learn here that principle of a Christian morality, which I am anxious to set forth, both as it stands apart from all ascetic error, and from all loose theories. It is the truth God has written on our being, and made the distinction between man and brute, that even our physical nature, if it be subject to the restraints of reason and unselfish affection, becomes the minister of our highest education, our holiest blessing. Nature does not lead us to impurity ; it is man himself who turns these bodies, made with so marvellous a beauty, into the thrall of appetite. There is no asceticism in the spirit of Christ. His precept is that of the wise discipline of mind and heart. I know no more perilous sophistry than has been offered by a writer on the history of

European morals, who claims that the influence of Christianity has been to demand too rigid an ideal of purity ; and I am the more disgusted at his notion, because in praising such a religion as too high for social practice, he plays into the hands of immorality. There is no stronger contradiction to the healthy teaching of the New Testament than is given us in the folly of the following ages, when the "forbidding to marry," which St. Paul classed among "doctrines of demons," became the creed of the anchorite ; when that church which made marriage a sacrament, dishonored it by ordaining celibacy as the holier life of priest and nun. I would not read that history with uncharitable eyes. Much, of course, must be allowed to a time when the convent was the only safe retreat from the disorders of the world ; nor can we deny that there was often an ideal of saintly purity which might win the reverence of men. But the unnatural and unsocial spirit of that church was not born of the religion of Christ. It created far more immorality than it cured ; and it was the best boon of the Reformation, next to its religious faith, that it taught a healthful social spirit. It made marriage a "holy estate," and the household the sphere of our truest growth. And such alone can

be the pure condition of Christian society, when its religion is knit with the pure affections. It is here it plants its restraining power. It hallows the ties of nature in the life of mutual care and sacrifice. That education is the only safeguard of the young. We cannot take them out of the world; and it is folly to suppose that the walls of a convent, or a secluded life which trains them in ignorance of the duties of manhood or womanhood, can give the moral strength they need. It is the design of our Maker, that there should be this healthful interchange of the affections at the time when the powers of body and mind are ripening; and the society of the household is their school for the larger world.

And here, then, in the knowledge of this law of purity we learn, my friends, the cause and the cure of our social vices. I talk no commonplace, but sad truth, which all who know the world must feel, when I say that we need look no further for the source of most of our immorality than to the hollow falsehoods of our own life. It is with the lust of the eye, the morbid imagination, the false sentiments all vice begins, as unwholesome food vitiates the digestion. Who has not felt the need of our Lord's warning

to check the first whisper of secret sin? We shudder at the sight of one who has fallen a loathsome outcast from the society of the pure ; but in many a case that youth has opened with as fair a dawn as to the timid child nestling by your side ; the neglect of a frivolous mother, the harsh discords of home, the absence of a pure example has left the heart to other companionships ; the contact of some vicious mind, the unchecked follies of the gay world have charmed the fancy, until long before the outward fall the chastity of the soul has fallen ; and at last, in the hour of temptation, the unhappy one has lost home, peace, joy, and the hope of life. And who that has known such a history, can think of it without pity and fear? who that looks on his own children does not pray God for grace to guard them from evil? Yes, it is the tenure of our life, that if we keep not this inward law of Christ, our senses and our passions may become masters, and neither conscience, nor self-respect, nor home, nor the law of man or God can hold us back.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain tops with sovran eye,  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face ;  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.



But I must not stay with these general thoughts. If it be true, Christian friends, that our social health lies in the keeping of this law of personal purity, I think it opens a very searching view of society itself. I approach a melancholy subject. We live in a very refined age, which converses in much politer phrase than afore-time. Nor do I doubt that there has been a real growth in moral feeling as well as speech, when I go back to the England of two hundred years ago, and note the coarseness of social manners from the courtier to the peasant. But we too often forget that our refinement tends in some respects to feed a more hidden evil. I must repeat, that much of the vice, which at this day baffles the best efforts of law or benevolence, comes from the tendencies of our artificial world; and you must pardon me if I speak frankly of some of these, which touch directly on the subject.

I shall name, first of all, that tone of loose opinion, which has become so marked a feature of our literature and life. It is the natural child of a worn out civilization and a sensual religion. We import it from abroad with our laces and fashionable manners. We breathe it in the air, we sip it in the luscious poison

of romance. It comes to us as a brilliant culture that has outgrown the stale dullness of our old Christian ideas; it teaches a social state too free to be tied by the vulgar bonds of marriage, a love that asks no sacrament save of the heart. We need not wonder, when we have seen it at times appear in some of those grosser forms, that outrage even our smooth epicurism. We trace the beast in the disguise of the fairy prince. I know no influence more evil than that of much of our modern literature in this reading day. Many who would be ashamed of the real life portrayed in the romance, revel in fancy over characters and scenes that leave them skeptics at the core. We have an expurgated Shakespeare; yet I had rather the young should read our old authors, whose heart is sound with all the coarseness of expression, than many of our sensational novels; and it were well if a host of them were burned in one heap, and their writers upon it. And is there any who can doubt the reality of such influences? Visit the Corinth of modern Europe, mingle with its men of wit, its brilliant women, who make our fashions in dress and morals; study the character of a people, keen, clever, refined, and frivolous; a city where amusement is life. and with all the

pomp of a Notre Dame social libertinism is the creed of thousands; open the novels of its favorite writers, where we may almost believe we are reading again the polished indecencies of a Catullus or the mockery of a Lucian, and we can see that society has reached the point at which it hardly cares to hide, that it has no faith in the Christian God or the Christian morality. It is a splendid animal. Need we look further for the cause of all the fitful changes of such a people from republic to empire, its theories of liberty without habits of private virtue to build on? We have not, I thank God, reached that stage of decay. We retain our faith in the sanctity of the marriage tie. But we may well remember that we have dangers enough to dread; and as we think of some of the volcanic explosions in our own social world that have brought to light the mass of seething and fermenting passions below, we can learn how hollow is much of the ground on which we tread. It is full time that we know how deeply society has lost the tone of its moral health.

But such a state of loose opinion points to yet other features of our artificial life. I trust none will imagine that I teach an ascetic morality, which looks with fear on any

pure amusements. Far from it. I believe in them. Nothing is gained when our religion lays down its prohibitions of dancing or opera, and forgets that it must first educate the conscience. "The little morality is the enemy of the great." But surely there is a vast chasm between a true refinement and much of the fashion of to-day. Is there no choice between the music of a noble master, and the hybrid of sensual harmony and ballet, that draws so many of our cultivated men and women? Shall we confound the sunshine of genuine society with the gaslight, in which the moral and the physical health pales and sickens; this mad vanity fair, where modesty learns to waltz with vice, and daylight dawns on weary folly? The fair tastes and graces of the heart do not bloom in such an atmosphere. Yet even this is not so ingrained a disease as some of the hypocrisies, which we are forced to see beneath the smooth surface of our social world. It is the growing tendency, as wealth and luxury increase, to make marriage a mercenary falsehood. I am glad, indeed, that in this country we have not yet reached the point where children are brought up with the idea that their future happiness is to be wholly decided by their parents, ac-

cordova to the interests of wealth or rank. It is the source of much of the domestic discord and infidelity of society abroad ; and it cannot be otherwise. Marriage is looked forward to as the first step to social freedom, or it becomes a selfish calculation. Yet it is, alas ! the vice of artificial civilization everywhere to return to the barbaric custom of selling the daughters at the will of the parent. With how many is it not the aim of education to starve the pure affections, and train the wishes of a child from infancy to the thought of a rich establishment ? How many call it prudence ! I know that we cannot change the necessities of social life ; but I know that we may make them the plea for a base bargain. We complain of the growing imitation of foreign habits. Our young men cannot bear the burdens of domestic life with a small income. Do we wonder that the license, once a reproach, is looked on now as quite pardonable ? What worse temptation than this, to forego the chaste security of home and the sacrifices of an honorable love ! Do we believe that any purity of soul, any sacredness of marriage, can remain with such an education ? Alas ! the mockery of a Christian benediction is said at the altar over many a young, but withered heart. For-

give me these strong words, for the thought brings back to me a reality known in years long past, yet that haunts me to-day as if I walked among living graves. Tell me not that such a truth should not be spoken ; it should be spoken and heard, on peril of our children's salvation. The heart God gave us, the love and joy and peace of home are too sacred that I dare be silent. To sacrifice them, to tamper with them is adultery.

But I must look again at our virtuous world. It is part of the code all admit, that the womanly character shall be unstained by a breath of reproach ; and that feeling is her moral safeguard. But when we mingle in polite life, we find, unhappily, that its law is on the surface. Society is severe in its observance of the decencies of manner, severe when any openly defies the appearance of purity. But it is no strange thing to meet, in circles that would resent reproach, men who corrupt the heart of every young companion, and stain the name of gentleman ; yet wealth or wit or easy address will gain them a ready entrance, while poverty or a mean garment would exclude them, whatever their real nobleness ; nay, their peccadilloes shall give them a reputation for knowledge of the world, and they shall be welcomed with smiles by the queens of

fashion. Is this a fancy sketch? I wish it were. Society is very gentle in its criticism, when the vice is a brilliant one. But there is another side to this moral code. The same kind world which passes by the slight faults of its favorites, now becomes the merciless judge. Some weak woman, cheated by her affection, or beguiled by flattery, falls a victim; and at once the social circle, where she moved yesterday a star, shuts her out forever from all hope of recovery, or if she be of lesser rank, she is doomed to die in the street. And do I blame, then, the law that enforces purity with such hardness? No; I do not blame it. I hold it better to allow even this penalty than to lose that standard of womanly virtue, which should fear a stain like a wound. But I blame the deep hypocrisy which condemns the one and acquits the other. I blame the falsehood that welcomes the tempter to the Eden of our homes, and expels the victim with pitiless scorn. I turn to another scene, another teacher of morality: I see One, in whom was no sin, standing while the pure Pharisee looked on, and a shrinking form knelt at His feet; I see that face, bending with a holy purity now on her and again on them; I hear Him say; "Let him who is without sin, cast the first stone." I only

repeat His words. Let the vices arrayed in white robes cast the first stone at the vices in rags and shame. And has Christian society learned the meaning of those few words? Oh, world! world! what a mockery thou art! If we but felt what sins against the law of purity have been the fruit of this hypocrisy, we should know that none is guiltless who silently partakes it.

Such are some of the features of our social morality; and I ask your sober thought to the view in which I have considered them. I thank God we have as pure and lovely a household life as can be found in any Christian land; and to that we owe our health amidst these contagions. But can we banish such things from our knowledge? These are the causes of nine-tenths of the evil we reprobate. Whence so many young men, rotten before ripe in worldly vices; so many young women, without the bloom of the heart, for whom life is already poisoned by the false sentiment that could never grow in the sanctuary of a true home? Whence these sad divorces, these as sad unions, where wealth hides only an aching heart? But there is a worse side to this. What is the sin that walks the streets and festers in the dens of the city, what but the debris washed down from the upper slopes of society, to be



cast out and trodden under foot? I am not using overstrained language. I am repeating the evidence, given by those who have gathered the dark facts together, that the greater number of these hapless outcasts are not from the poorest and most ignorant, but from those misled by a frivolous education, by the love of dress, the showy follies they have seen in the world about them, and thus the easy victims of its polished villains. I have not a word to say, as to the methods of our legislation. It is a scourge, for which all is wise that may check the growing entail of disease. All honor to the Christian goodness, which has gone forth into the streets to seek and save the lost. May the love of the dear Lord, who lifted the Magdalene from the dust, bless them in their brave and often despairing task! But our best efforts stanch a bleeding vein, while the great artery gapes open. No, my friends, while the vices of the social world feed the evil, every outward check is partial; it will be still recruited afresh, and its end is death.

And thus I repeat, in closing, the truth with which I began, as it comes near to ourselves, that society alone can purify its own vices. I know no other wisdom. I know no other hope for our growing civilization. Pardon me, if I love

to turn from these sickening pictures of a false life to that of a Christian home. I am old fashioned enough to believe in it ; and perhaps to some my sentiments may be a wholesome novelty, as with the epicure who knew every vintage of the Rhine, but was charmed for the first time with a glass of spring water. If marriage has been to us this holy estate, that God created and blessed, it is the sacrament of the heart. Although our novels end with the wedding-day, our real life begins with the after volume ; the beauty of a face, the romance of a young passion soon fade away, and it is only a nobler companionship of mind and heart that can lift us above the drudgeries of the daily world. We need not charge on anything save our own selfishness the discord that embitters so many households. But if there have been indeed a mutual growth in those pure tastes which ennoble home, that affection which sweetens all sacrifice, it will be fairer in age than any dreams of our youth ; it will be in the rich words of Jeremy Taylor, in his "Marriage Ring," which in these days of silly books I wish could be read by every young pair, "shut up and secured by all the arts of heaven, the locks and bars of modesty, by honor and reputation, by fear and shame, by interest and high regards." Society will be

prized at its true worth for a refined culture, for a needful recreation ; but we shall keep our homes with us, as the Persian, wherever he went, carried his sacred fire. And if there be a wealth more than all God bequeaths, that passes down by a law of sure entail to our children, it is this. They have learned in such an atmosphere the graces that fashion envies, but cannot give ; in the book by the fireside a thirst for the choicest treasures of older or newer literature ; in their simple tastes a scorn of " the great vulgar or the small," whose wealth is without brain and whose finery without refinement ; they have gained the self-restraint of conscience, the chastity unstained in thought or feeling, the nobleness of the Christian gentleman, the purity of the Christian woman ; and that living education you have given them, will go with them when they must pass into the world, to keep them from the evil.

May God bestow on you, my friends, this wealth to which alone he adds no sorrow, this of the pure affections ! I know that there are many of you who have this happiness in full measure ! I doubt not you will receive with a hearty sympathy all I have said on this difficult yet weighty subject. If I have spoken with a fearless honesty

of the evils of our time, it is that we might rather learn our own temptations than gloat over the vices of others ; that we might follow Him, whose Gospel at once hallows the purity of home and says : "thy sins be forgiven," to the unpitied lepers of the world. Be this law written on your hearts, Christian parents ! As you preserve its sanctity in your own example, as you rear your sons and daughters in the faith, that household joys are a richer fortune than is bequeathed by many a millionaire ; that marriage is a holy covenant, and the curse of a barren life rests on it when it is not this ; that society is more than a painted and enamelled falsehood ; as you learn the sum of all social wisdom in St. Paul's counsel to his disciple : "Keep thyself pure," you shall have the blessing that comes down to the children's children.

## VIII.

## SOCIAL HONESTY.

*Thou shalt not steal.*—EXOD. xx. 15.

*Providing for things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men.*—2 COR. viii. 21.

WE live in a time, when commerce is often called the ruling power ; and the claim is true if it be understood in its nobler meaning. There is a social science which looks no higher than the code of the market-place ; there is a science, which regards commerce as the bond of Christian civilization, and resting on moral laws, as needful for our learning as the puzzles of finance. In that light I shall expound this old commandment, and perhaps it may teach us somewhat more than we are wont to find in so plain a saying.

It will not be necessary for me to defend at length the moral view of the right of property, on which this law depends. We may well regard as one of the strange distempers of our times

those theorists, who deny that such a right has any basis in natural or moral justice, and even accept the maxim of Proudhon that "property is theft." It springs from the embittered sense of the dishonesty that wears the form of law, and the social anarchy too often called progress. Yet while we mourn over the inequality of the world, and strive for a better harmony of capital and labor, we can never help it by any radical absurdity. The right of property is simply based on our inherent ownership in the fruit of our own mind and will and hands. I do not suppose that it came with the first stage of social history, when men dwelt, as our Indians to-day, in the tribal condition, with only the common share of the hunting-ground. But he who first planted his acre, and hedged it off from the open common, took the first step in civilization, and all social growth has been in the adjustment of such rights. Any theory which denies this, destroys civilization itself. If there were no such law, there could be no security to labor; the equality of to-day would be a worse inequality to-morrow, and the drones of the hive would live more than now on the honey. But it is equally plain that there must be many evils mixed with this growth, incapable of perfect cure. The

state should uproot all tyrannies that deprive the citizen of the use of his talent or industry. Yet it cannot take away the estates of the nobleman, although his ancestor of the iron hand seized them by what would to-day be robbery ; it cannot annul the right of inheritance, although a lazy heir may enjoy wealth gained by honest labor ; it cannot detect all fraud or punish all it detects.

Here, then, we learn the nobler law of Christian morals. The religion of Christ does not seek to alter the natural order of the world by any theories of equality. Nor is there any likeness between it and those socialist schemes that often caricature it. The church of the primitive day was no community in which the right of property was renounced ; as we know from the New Testament in the case of Ananias, and in frequent allusions to the rich in the infant household. It was a family, where the voluntary gift came from the one mind and one heart. But our religion must claim a higher duty than that which is based on a mere legal tenure of property. It will not defend existing evils on the plea of social order. It seeks to plant in the conscience that law of honesty, built on the mutual obligation of man to man. I can give no better definition than in the

word itself, as it is used by St. Paul: "Provide things honest in the sight not only of the Lord, but of men." It is a striking instance of the degeneracy in moral ideas, so often traceable in change of words, that honesty with us means strictness in the letter of a bargain, while in the New Testament, as in the teaching of the great Roman moralist, it means honorable. To be honest is to be true to the largest spirit of social duty; it is "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over." An honest man obeys this unwritten law; he is inflexible in hatred of any craft, in loyalty to the least claim of conscience; in a bargain of honor as in a written bond; in a penny as in a million; in all the nice relations which do not come within the letter, but are the essential aim of justice.

Now it will seem to some minds an amusing ignorance of the world, when I offer this as in any sense a practical rule of society. None will deny it in the abstract. But there will be not a few, even among upright men as the world goes, who will say, It is true enough in the pulpit, but when we get into the week-day life, we must, as in mechanics, allow for friction. It is this self-styled practical morality I wish to



meet on its own ground. What do we mean by it? Does any soberly think that we can have two consciences,—one for private use and another for social duty? I affirm that without this moral principle, recognized in the public conscience, there is no power either in courts or codes to keep men from becoming a pack of wolves and foxes. Let me ask your best attention to this truth. I wish to show it especially as it appears in certain theories widely prevalent, and held by many as the best wisdom of our age of commerce. It is the boasted discovery, that self-interest is the one motive power of human action. Educate an intelligent knowledge of this, and the man learns that his own good is that of the greatest number. It is the favorite maxim of our economists. Let each man, each state look out for self; and all individual interests will combine for the general weal. Now there is a sense in which this principle is true. That is the most thrifty community where each depends on his own talent; and it is the secret of our growth, in comparison with older lands, where the laborer looks for support to the state. The life of commerce is in this freedom of individual action. But this is quite another thing than to say, that self-interest is the motive power

of social good. Society rests, and must rest on a faith in the moral integrity of men. I turn to political economy, and I ask no better definition than it gives me. Wealth consists in real value. It flows from the productive skill of all classes. The farmer who raises the crop of cotton, the manufacturer who weaves it into cloth, the merchant who brings it to market, add each to its worth; and commerce is the fair exchange of these values. Whatever represents no solid value, is a dishonesty fatal to the public good. It is strange that, while we understand this principle in common cases of fraud, we often forget it in its larger applications. We have a righteous law against gambling, although some make fortunes by it, and are even sent to congress. What, then, is the sin of using our money in this way? Simply that the gambler trades on the passions of his victims, and his gain is not in the circuit of productive industry, but only stimulates idleness and fraud. But if so, all callings which have no real basis, are the same in principle and result. Such is the moral law of commerce, and in this it is only the moral law of the New Testament, as it bears on social wrongs, on the trickeries of finance, the inflation of public credit, the interchange of all business. Society, then, must

rest on the integrity of men. But as justice cannot wholly prevent the sharpers, who prey on the social body as the huge leeches on the monsters of the sea, there must be an unwritten law in the social conscience. It is useless to say that self-interest will teach men to be just in their dealings. Avarice and cupidity put out the eyes of the most intelligent self-interest. I know nothing truer than the remark of Paley, who, with all his utilitarianism, shows sometimes a common sense amounting to moral intuition. "Confidence," he says, "is essential to intercourse. Some may think that a general caution might do as well; but this is not to consider how every hour of our lives we trust to others." If, in a word, there be no other principle than that of a shrewd self-interest, the cunning of men will not only outwit the laws, but outwit itself. There may be here and there an unselfish theorist, like Mill, who believes that self-love can be transformed into the love of humanity. The bulk of mankind will only understand by it the "honesty that is the best policy;" but he who is honest from that motive, will obey the law just so far as to escape the jail or the loss of reputation, and the same policy will lead him to any wrong that cannot be reached.

It is this plain truth, then, which needs the thought of every man who has an interest in the health of the community. I trust, therefore, I shall not be thought to trench upon the freedom which every Christian man may claim, be he clergyman or layman, in exposing with honest frankness some of these delusions. In entering on this subject, I must be understood to single no profession. The same vices are to be found in every class. The clergyman, who sells himself for a salary ; the lawyer or physician, who prostitutes his noble calling to dishonest gain, is as base as any other. The sins of trade are only the exponents of the current morality, just as money is the medium of exchange. I honor the mercantile body as highly as any member of it ; and I address many of those, whose spotless integrity has made them the keepers of our commercial honor. It is, indeed, a world of marvellous activities we witness at this day in every sphere of commerce ; nor is there anything more wonderful than the unity whereby its complex machinery is guided. All lands, all races, all forms of human labor are joined in one living organism. The merchant in Japan telegraphs to his correspondent in New York ; millions pass from house to house by a stroke of the pen ; huge

crops, long before nature has ripened them, are pledged for the market ; railroads grow by magic to carry the grains and the gold across the continent ; and all, from the colossal banker to the broker and the retailer, are the hundred hands of this Briareus of modern trade. We laugh at the cumbrous, old-fashioned modes of fifty years ago, as we do at the miscalled diligence, whose snail's pace vexes the traveller. It would be absurd to doubt for a moment the excellence as well as the grandeur of our commercial system. Capital may grow to a dangerous degree, yet we cannot stay the accumulations of legitimate trade. Hard gold may be better than paper ; but our necessities of exchange have created and must always require our banking operations and bills of credit. Yet there are certain simple laws, which every merchant knows better than other men to be essential to commerce itself. There must be money somewhere to redeem the floating paper ; some understood rules of business, by which a due proportion is kept between the vast outlays of trade and the wealth that covers them. And it is the greater necessity of a system, which must rest on the good faith of men, which by its very complications must involve infinite risks to the safety of thousands, in every class from banker to

laborer, that the change from the old-fashioned habits should not impair the old-fashioned integrity.

Yet here is the ceaseless danger of society to forget the moral condition of its own success. It is, of course, impossible in so vast a business world to guard against disasters, that we expect as the captain in the China seas the periodical typhoon; nor can there be entire freedom from the large class of professional sharpers. But it becomes a grave question, when we see such growing looseness of business morals as to shake the very ground of social integrity. I can give you but a meagre sketch of the arts of the commercial world. Pardon an inexperienced student, who dares intrude into such mysteries; yet even to a recluse in his clerical cell there come stray items of knowledge from the outer world. What abundance of notes, the face of which tells another tale than the transaction behind; what railroads that are schemes of the most unprincipled speculation; what vast western cities that are only laid out in lots of paper! We punish forgery, yet this is the self-same principle. Forgery is not merely the imitation of a bank note; it makes the note worthless, because it pretends to stand

for a value. A sagacious sharper needs only place his thousand, as the gambler his bit of gold on the wheel, in the hands of our stock operators, whose business is to force the market, and next week he may be master of a fortune. It is astonishing how many enterprises may be carried on with the smallest amount of capital. The old definition of vagrant embraces a large variety of persons, who have "no visible means of support," yet get on very handsomely. A great part of our wealth has no bottom at all; it exists only on a credit, more uncertain than the weather on the page of an almanac. This life of hazard becomes at last the keenest pleasure. Your successful neighbor can show you a property of half a million in railroad bonds and real estate: it looks like solid riches; but to-morrow there comes a turn of affairs; his Aladdin's palace is gone; yet he has bought with it house and coach and horses, and the only victims are those who have sold him the luxuries for his worthless notes. Are these transactions rare? You have seen their result in those monstrous combinations, still, in spite of all efforts of reform, the shame of our commercial world, where a few unprincipled adventurers can derange the healthy circulation of business, and ruin

in a day hundreds of hapless men. Am I told that they are inevitable? It is a blind selfishness that can pass them by. The respectable gambling-houses, lately shut in Baden-Baden, are but a miniature of these vices of commerce.

But we may look at other examples. We may consider the fraud practised in the deterioration of goods. I have drawn these facts not from fancy, but from those who have gathered this knowledge with care. We expect such fraud in certain things. No man looks for genuine wine, or pure Mocha. But many startling disclosures in these few years have shown that it is now a permanent feature in almost every class of manufacture. The silk gains unfair weight from the dyes used in it; the moist sugar is sold in the dried cask, and presently becomes lighter; we can hardly tell if the milk for our children be not poison, the loaf of good weight, or the house of seasoned material. Modern art has found out so many new processes, that this corruption is fed to the most vicious extent. Look again at the cheats daily practised in the unfair sale of goods. Go into our trading establishments and see in how many the merit of a salesman is to make an inferior thing seem best, to give scant measure with a winning smile, and bend his con-



science to anything to ensnare custom. There are fashionable shops where a scruple of moral sense is laughed at as idiocy, and no honest young man can stay six months without losing his principles or his employer. Look at the system of commercial agents, where every trick is used to secure custom and stock the market with inferior goods. To what an extent, further, has the modern system of advertising been debased, so that at last the falsehood has begun to cheat itself, and we believe in nothing which we read in bill or newspaper. Everything is best ; every man sells better and more cheaply than all others ; every medicine is a catholicon, every invention is the master-work of art. We have been learning that pretension is profit, that success lies not in making a better thing, but in palming a poor one on the public.

But I cannot dwell on a hundredth part of these facts. I pass to their connection with the whole character of society. Consider their influence on the moral tone of commerce. It is not, I repeat, the mercantile world that is chargeable with all the corruption ; nor do I doubt that it retains in it enough of the sterling principle of honor to slough off such diseases. There must be fraud always in the world ; yet there are circum-

stances to-day, which develop peculiar forms of wrong. Human nature is no worse, but it grows shrewder; and this very ingenuity blinds the social conscience. There is a current in the great maelstrom of modern trade, which draws into it the weak vessel, sailing on its perilous edge. I am only repeating the truth, which men of business have told me, with an emphasis far beyond the sketch I have drawn, that within the last twenty years this lax morality has grown to such a degree as almost to force many honest merchants to connive at it, or lose the chance of success. Need I ask if this be not confirmed by some of the saddest cases of ruin? Yet what are the disasters of business to the discovery they have brought to light, of the amount and variety of wrong, long disguised under the mask of reputable commerce. Living on appearances has been the fashion. Great bankers and tradesmen have been thriving on the emptiest credit; merchant princes in their ambition have dared risk wantonly the property of multitudes entrusted to their honor, and abused their legitimate calling to the wildest speculation. It is not difficult to see the steps that lead to the general looseness of morals. Such dealings may be frowned on by a few old-fashioned

merchants; but it is a huge temptation to one without stern integrity to emulate such brilliant tacticians; nor is it easy for even the well-meaning man to escape the tone of the atmosphere he lives in. A transaction, which in private dealings would be called dishonest, is only a business necessity, first winked at, then quietly admitted. It soon becomes the code, that so long as a fraud is not open, but understood between parties, it is quite pardonable. Now and then some bungler steps too far, and the law pounces on him; but in the main it succeeds, and so the system becomes a vast mutual assurance company of deceits, until a crisis reveals the fact. Not long ago one of our huge factories fell in from roof to floor; machinery, piles of stock, hundreds of workmen at mid-day heaped in fearful ruin; and it was found that all was owing to a hidden flaw in one solid-looking iron column at the centre.

But this corruption of the morals of business does not stop here. It is the great feeder of actual crime. We complain of the astounding growth of robbery in these past years, the cases of defalcation and breach of trust. Is it, then, strange? Is not our blindness the strange thing? Is it strange that our young men have learned

from the impunity of these colossal sins that fraud is allowable, if it can prove successful? There is a sure epidemic in crime. Perhaps some remember a notorious sharper, who a few years ago was seized after a long career of brilliant villanies, and at his trial the plea of moral insanity was offered. That plea did not save him; yet I believe it was a true one. Our physicians have begun to mark it as a distinct disease; the sharpening of the intellectual powers, but the loss of all sense of moral obligation; an insanity not void of guilt, not to be left unpunished, but more sternly punished. There is this fatal tendency always in vice to forget its shrewdness, to grow careless at the height of success, and precipitate its own ruin. We may well stand aghast as we look this very hour at the cases not of vulgar but public villany; the great robbers who walk unwhipped of justice, the men in our national councils who dare to do what would lodge a common thief in the Tombs. We have sent one imperial scoundrel to prison, who described himself with happy irony as by profession "a statesman;" but we have a hundred in his place, whom no law reaches. And can we not see the last result? It is hence the lesser thieves abound, as the car-

rion bir is where the carcass is, or the jackals who finish the prey the lions have left; and hence there comes at last in every community the mob which defies all law, regards society as a world where honest men are poor and rich men rogues, acts out the maxim of a Proudhon, that property is theft, and breaks open the coffers for the general scramble. We talk of "the dangerous classes." The most dangerous are not always among the poor.

But we have not yet considered the full influence of such vices. This dishonesty affects our social world. I rejoice that we have an honorable wealth, that represents not only mental culture and pure tastes, but Christian graces also. But we have seen within these few years the swift growth of a luxury that represents nothing save an empty falsehood. It comes from the same causes that deprave business. And how should it be otherwise? The driving merchant makes his fortune down town, and he must spend it, while the semblance lasts, in the establishment up town; his ideas of family splendor are as void of solid worth as his ideas of trade; he drowns the cares of traffic in high-priced wines and rich dishes, and his wife and daughters are fond partners in the art of living on appearances.


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There is somewhat very spectral to one who reflects on the character of much of our fashionable life. I have felt sometimes, when I looked at the pomp and pride of it, the equipages rolling along the avenue, the women in all the colors of the rainbow, the painted faces and triumphant liveries, as if I were walking in some ghostly world; and each instant I looked, as in the fairy tales of our youth, to see an enchanter wave his wand, the coach change to a nutshell, the palace to a hovel, and the princesses descend in sackcloth and tatters. The distemper thus reaches us at all points. It feeds the ambition of the merchant, the growth of social idleness; it enters into every calling; it spoils our education; and more than all, it affects even our religion. I should be myself guilty of dishonesty, if I did not frankly touch on this. It is the self-same disregard of simple reality, which leads us so often to build our sumptuous churches, careless whether they are overladen with debt, whether we are giving to God an honest offering or no, if only we keep pace with the fashionable tide, and have an edifice where we enjoy a sacred opera, and fill the pews with the worshippers of stocks.

I give you, therefore, my friends, the plain

meaning of the commandment. This Christianity of appearances will not save us. There is one religion and one morality for church or market-place ; and the most pungent lesson we need to-day, is that to be religious we must be moral also. It is because the Christian pulpit has too often forgotten to urge this law of integrity and honor, as well as faith or ritual ceremony, this Gospel which provides things honest in the sight of God and in the sight of all men ; because it has so spoken of these "mercantile virtues" as to make them seem of lower worth, instead of real fruit out of the stem of holiness, that it has been shorn of its power. "Who shall abide," says David, "in Thy tabernacle ;" but he does not answer, as some do, the man of vital piety ; he tells what piety is,— "he that walketh uprightly, and speaketh the truth ; he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not ; he that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent." This was David's religion, and it is good religion to-day. It is this alone, this Christian honesty in the warehouse, the market, the exchange, which in a day like ours of reckless enterprise, shall save society from its vices. I speak to men whose integrity will approve my words. If there

be any who say, what avails this preaching? as well preach cleanliness to the streets as think to cure these selfish sins, I have one only reply. You have seen the cause and its effects. If we cannot stay the uncleanness, we must accept the moral cholera that follows it. I believe we can stay it. I believe in the words of Burke, "when bad men conspire, good men must combine." It rests on you, Christian merchants, to maintain this law of God and men. All of us are bound by the same social obligation; but it is the noblest feature of your calling, that it teaches our brotherhood in the great body of labor, of mutual faith, of common interests; each a receiver, each a giver; and as you thus keep not only your own unstained honor, but the honor of the community; as you feel that your wealth is a stewardship for the public good; as you carry out the task of reform to its end, and unmask fraud whether in high places or low, in the courts of justice, in the gambling-houses of trade, in our social existence, in our national councils, you shall save the life of the commonweal.





## IX.

## THE LAW OF TRUTH.

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.—*  
Exod. xx. 16.

*The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity : so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body. . . . Therewith bless we God, even the Father ; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.—ST. JAMES iii, 6, 9.*

**I**T is an old offender who stands to-day at the bar of conscience ; one who has been found guilty of the foulest wrongs, has blasted the peace of households, laid plots against the most unstained character, and kindled the fires of war ; yet though condemned by the voice of all, he walks in open defiance of God or man. This offender is the tongue. We are again to try these crimes by the supreme law of Christ, and to utter His verdict.

I shall endeavor, my friends, to show the wide purpose of this ancient statute, as we interpret it by the light of the New Testament ; the duty

it enforces, and its manifold transgressions, so often overlooked by the standard of men. We cannot but perceive the rank given to such a law in the Mosaic table. All, indeed, even the most primitive codes, have guarded the sanctity of the judicial oath ; but there is hardly another to be found in so early a time, where the statute has been placed beside those against murder and robbery. Nor is the aim of the law merely against perjury ; it is, as we draw from its whole tenor, against every form of false witness, as slander or evil-speaking, that violates the right of our neighbor. This primeval sentence, then, anticipates the spirit of our ripest civilization, which seeks much more than the safety of property or person. Words in the eye of the law are realities as well as deeds. Character is an invisible thing, not to be counted as the worth of an acre, or stolen like jewelry ; it is more precious than all wealth, and the malice that endangers it is a crime to be sternly punished. Yet it is plain enough that the world we live in is a very slanderous one ; nor is there any case in which human law is so weak as in the prevention of this class of wrongs. If we think for a moment what character is ; if we remember that it depends not on the verdict of a court,

but on the general confidence of society, this vast Dionysius' ear, where a myriad greedy, selfish listeners are waiting day and night to catch a passing sound, and the least whisper reverberates in thunders ; that it is affected by the talk of servants, the gossip of the shop, the street, the private circle, the opinion of the crowd, good or evil, wise or foolish, friends or foes ; and thus in how many ways such opinion may be misled, how a breath may change it, how a suspicion may crush what neither innocence nor the just decision of the law can rebuild, we may understand the impunity of slander. Words may be deadlier than knife or poison, yet we can seldom seize them. It is plain to any one, familiar with courts • of justice, that a case of libel must be of a gross and palpable sort to come within its reach. If a man defame another, so that it shall touch him in his business ; if he call him openly a thief or an adulterer ; and if the charge have been bruited in some written or printed form, or may be proven by valid witnesses, it is actionable. Yet the remedy may be worse than the disease. For in most cases, when the wrong wounds the deepest feelings of honor or family affection, the very publicity of trial is a keener torture ; and even the acquittal of the court may leave a

stain of suspicion on the character. A wise man will often rather bear slander than prosecute it, in a day when newspapers and police reporters have more than replaced the Inquisition of old time.

It is clear then, that the spirit of the Christian commandment reaches beyond any human standard. False witness is a sin of the deepest dye, which we are to measure by its intrinsic wrong against the peace of our fellow men. But not only does it denounce it in shape of a malicious slander; it declares every form of speech, direct or indirect, open or hidden, if unjust to another, to be the same in its root. The Gospel of Christ does not teach, of course, blindness to the sins of men, or a false charity that would hide them. We find no such unmanliness in the character of our sinless Master; he unmasked the hypocrisy of the Pharisee without reserve, and the lightnings of Sinai were not more scorching than those that shot from His meek lips. Nor do I suppose that his precept forbids the utterance of a righteous wrath or a keen wit when it is needed in defence of the truth. We would not smooth the torrents of fiery eloquence, as they pour out of the soul of Isaiah on the idolaters of his time. The Gospel morality enjoins

- the discipline that begins with the motives ; the justice, that prompts each word as well as deed ; that weighs men or opinions without bias, sees all the lights or shades of human character, gives fair measure even in condemnation, and knows that the best weapon of Christian truth is a manly, courteous, and loving heart.

We are, then, to judge by this law, my brethren, first of all, the heinousness of the sin that violates it. I know not with what care you have studied the New Testament on this point ; but I am convinced that few reflect how much of its teaching bears directly on this discipline of our speech. There is a keen insight in that chapter whence our text is taken, where the apostle James speaks of the capacity of language. We have been wont too often, from the influence of a notional theology, which talks of St. Paul's doctrine of faith and never reaches its heart, to look on these precepts as concerned rather with the outer vesture of piety. But it is a shallow reading of this great epistle ; and even our expositors, who seek to reconcile the two, have often mistaken the whole drift. Our apostle's idea of works is the very same with the Pauline idea of real holiness ; and each virtue he enjoins is traced to its root in the Christian .

affections. His description of the tongue thus opens to us the whole connection of our speech with the inward man. It is, indeed, a thought, my friends, we too seldom ponder. This marvellous faculty, one of the unpassed boundary lines between us and the brute, that tells its wants in dumb sign-language ; this power, of which our latest science can only say that it finds it a rich, complex fact with the rudest races, and that its origin is a mystery ; this subtlest organ of the soul, so linked with it that thought cannot be without word, by which we reveal the truths of the unseen world, and give a voice to the most delicate feeling of the heart ;—this gift of God has in it alike the capacity of use or of abuse. The same genius that moulds it into the music of heaven, can debase it to the dialect of hell. What is there more striking to a scholar than to see how, as civilization has ripened each tongue from the coarse vocabulary of the savage, it has made it the polished vehicle of vice ! Not a sensual desire, a passion of hate or scorn, an hypocrisy, a craft, a wanton fancy, a cruel intent, that has not its utterance in words. Think what a weapon, keener than a Damascus blade, it becomes in a Voltaire for his sarcastic wit ! what a power of refined ribaldry in some of our modern essayists

and romancers! And when we turn from these to our own common life, and remember how much of it is made up of words, how they enter into the household, the neighborly circle, our pleasures or tastes, our trade or social interchange, we have some conception of the responsibility God has lodged in such a gift. Words are things. They are not pulsations of the air. We think them so. We speak them and forget them. Yet each word came from within, and each has its abiding result. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," is a sentence few examine, yet the Scripture only echoes the experience of our conscience and our life.

And now if we pass to the violations of this law, so often found not only in what we call the world, but that large part of the world we call the Church, we may learn some weighty lessons. I can only name a few of the eminent forms of "false witness." Yet even these will give us food enough for reflection. The first and most notable is that of misrepresentation. It is plain that without open falsehood, nay, without slanderous design, there may be such a distortion of a character or opinion as to convey an utterly false idea. This moral obliquity is the secret of

half the wrangles of mankind. No character is so rare as his, who is simply just ; and indeed few reckon it so noble a virtue as a blind or hot enthusiasm. But when we see the vice on its grander scale, we know its capacity. What is there, which the shrewd masters who play on every string of human nature understand better than how to bend the passions to an injustice? Most men identify their opinions with certain senseless shibboleths of a party or a church ; and hence the partisan has only to rouse such prejudice, to ring the changes on a few phrases, and he can kill the best argument or the best character. "He who will set up for a skilful manager," says South in his sermon on the fatal imposture of words, "needs never inquire whether they have any understanding, but with two or three popular empty words, such as superstition, right of the subject, liberty of conscience, well tuned and humored, may whistle them backward and forward, upward and downward, till he is weary. Indeed, take any passion of the soul, while it is predominant, and just in the critical height of it, nick it with some lucky or unlucky word, and you may certainly overrule it to your purpose." It might seem from so many palpable



follies that the trick would be exhausted, yet it always succeeds. Any demagogue can turn the wrath of the people against the wisest counsellor, by a few apt phrases about the privileges of a class; any self-styled conservative can block the justest reform by classing it among radical ideas; any advocate of total abstinence can cast obloquy on the soberest friend of temperance by a little declamation, until a crowd will say, as aforetime, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." There are all degrees of such misrepresentation, from loud abuse to quiet and subtle calumny. It is an ingenious method to class an opponent with those whom the world has already condemned as heterodox. It is still another to make his truth responsible for all the folly that unwise minds have added to it. These arts are common to all; but there are some harsher instances. I regret to say that this style of misrepresentation is one of the worst features of religious strife. I doubt not that one cause of the vice which has gained the name of theological hatred, lies in the fact, as a Spanish proverb says, that "women and clergymen have no other weapons than their tongues." Men are far more cautious in the use of words, when they must answer for

them by the small-sword or the pistol. We have inherited this art of religious slander from early times; and indeed it is the chief hindrance to a knowledge of ancient truth or error, that we have to learn it through the fierce abuse so common to the Fathers. A Cyril could not refute the error of Nestorius without blackening his moral character. What more deplorable than to hear the noble Luther railing at Erasmus in terms that suit a termagant; or the learned Whitgift and Cartwright calling each other idiot and heathen! Yet I am sorry to say, while we have less of this grossness than aforetime, we still have our divines who fling about their firebrands with strange recklessness. Poor vilifiers of the Gospel they claim to defend! Can they never learn that Christian truth is best served by argument and sound learning and courteous speech? What a treatise on Christian ethics would be written, if we gathered from all the volumes of polemic theology the examples of this false spirit? Who can doubt that it has harmed religion more than all open assaults from Celsus to Strauss? Moral truthfulness is no secondary virtue; it is of the substance of the Gospel, and the secret of its power.

But there is a still finer weapon by which slan-

der may do its work, I mean insinuation. The safest and shortest way to ruin a character is by creating a suspicion. "Suspensions," in Bacon's words, "are like bats amongst birds ; they ever fly by twilight. There is nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little." This art is well known to all diplomatists of the social world, and its study forms an essential branch of education, as in modern warfare the mine and masked battery have pushed aside the ruder weapons of old time. If your neighbor in business or social life be the object of your dislike, let it be carefully whispered that his affairs are not quite as safely managed as they might be, or his habits a little questionable. If a woman hate her fair rival, a well-aimed word will as surely as the touch of an infected hand blacken her beauty, and leave her helpless. Who does not know the power of such insinuation ? who does not meet every day the victims of these unseen wrongs ? What men, amongst the purest in every calling, have been injured beyond recovery, without a trace of the source whence the calumny came ? What surer weapon against those who by their public position, may not be openly attacked without risk, but can be easily stabbed in the dark ! Let a good hater dislike a clergy-

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man, however learned or godly ; it is only needful, should he be a little more devout than the usual standard, to hint that he has some Romeward tendencies, and his character will soon be disposed of ; or if he be somewhat too large-minded to be shut within the party creed, call him a rationalist, and you have sent him a hundred lynx-eyed critics. But it is not necessary for this style of slander to use articulate words at all ; nay, the most inarticulate language is best for its end. A whisper dropped carelessly in some corner among the combustibles, a look, a shrug of the shoulders, a sneer, a laugh may serve the purpose. There is not a sadder feature of our human nature, than the readiness with which men accept such insinuations, and the rarity with which they have the manhood to repel them. Rumor with most minds is presumptive evidence, and they will say with a knowing air, "There must be some fire in so much smoke."

There is, again, a kindred vice to this ; that of detraction. The word is most expressive ; and it is a striking fact that almost all these titles are borrowed from the Latin, for our honest Saxon speech had little skill in these refinements. It implies no positive assault, but the sly filching away of the reputation. If we be unable to find

evil in the opinions or actions of another, we can attribute his good to doubtful motives. The truest touchstone of our own character is our judgment of others. An honest mind loves to believe in honesty, and is slow even to admit its own doubts ; a base mind must see somewhat base in the highest virtue. "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils," was to the Pharisee a judgment that showed his own keen insight. Every virtue may be thus caricatured by the selfish critic ; a generous man may be called prodigal, and a frugal man a niggard ; a hero foolhardy, and a discreet person a coward ; a devout Christian a Pharisee, and a noble enthusiast a fanatic. No style of reputable slander ensures so ready a success at so easy cost. Is a man valiant for the truth against some party shibboleth ? Say that he wants notoriety. Is one raised to some post of honor above our own ? Hint that he has an eye to the income of it. Has a benevolent heart done a great deed of charity ? Sneer at it as an ostentation or an addled folly. And yet another style of this detraction is in the malicious exposure of the faults of a good man to the gaze of the curious world. The law has expressed it in its maxim, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel ;" and

though it seem a paradox, it is often sadly verified. There may be personal defects, unhappy mistakes, which, if wantonly told, may bring the most undeserved reproach. It is here the detractor has his virtuous triumph. Some frailty, which a generous heart would pass by, is made the ground of a ruinous charge ; and the moral burglar, with a few grains of powder in the keyhole, can blow open the safe with all its treasures. But we have not exhausted these ingenious devices. We have heard of "damning with faint praise," yet few know what a wealth of arts it includes. We may express our admiration of another's virtues, yet regret some fault that spoils them all ; we may hint with a courteous vagueness at a flaw of which we are not at liberty to speak, or we may give a very strong opinion by declining to give any. And I may well add, under this head, the slander of silence. There is no more convenient way of helping on a falsehood than to let it pass unrebuked. If we be wise in the knowledge of the world, it will not do to risk our fame in defending an innocent man, whom the leaders of society have agreed to hunt down ; yet we need not lend ourselves to any wrong ; for we can keep both our consciences and our safety by a prudent non-committal. That is the stan-

dard of many whom the world calls honorable men. Ah, what examples every hour, that make us almost believers in the basest theory of human selfishness ! What trickeries, what polite assassinations, what cowardly surrenders, what leaders in state and church, who wink at any wrong to save their personal position ! All these the law of Christ calls false witnesses ; it gives the self-same name, whether to open malice or covert betrayal, to the kiss of a Judas or the hate of a Caiaphas ; it declares the receiver as bad as the thief.

But we reach here another species of this vice, which I must not omit, because its moral character is too often quite forgotten. I mean that habit, sometimes styled in polite circles a social spirit, but known in Scripture as tale-bearing. Hitherto I have spoken chiefly of malicious wrong ; but the vice before us may spring from no evil design, yet be capable of the same effects. It would seem, by the frequent hints in the letters of St. Paul and St. James, to have come down to us by unbroken succession from the primitive time ; and the portraiture is so exact that none can fail to recognize it, of those "wandering from house to house, not only idle, but tattlers also and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not." Every town,

every parish has some of these social persons, of so disinterested a character that they spend their time on few selfish cares at home. "Nothing human is foreign" to them; [their omnipresence is a miracle; wherever you go in church or street, or at the social board, they are there; they gather the floating gossip of the neighborhood; every person is known by this detective police; every topic is sifted; and such is their imaginative power, that they can throw a charm of mystery over the slenderest facts, and create a world out of nothing. It may be the history of some family circle, the quarrel between husband and wife, a legacy or a loss, a betrothal or a divorce, a jest or a scandal; it may be a question of church costume; or it may be the last sermon, and it is strange with what sagacity they know the very individual whose faults were touched by it; yet all is talked over with no malice, but with a Christian regret, a whispered secrecy; and so, as some insects are said to thrive on the poison of plants, these persons enjoy life, and are held very social characters. And what is the result? A word, whispered in secret, is heard on the housetops; old friends are severed, a neighborhood convulsed, a parish divided. Is there, I pray you, a



creature more contemptible than this, who fattens on the griefs of others, and passes day and night in such petty larceny ? This Christian gossip is simply slander ; and if without evil motive, it is often the worse, because it goes for harmless conversation. And what does the morality of the Gospel teach us here ? It is that for every idle word God shall bring us into judgment ; not as some foolish expositors have rendered the warning, each word of harmless mirth, but the idle words that leave a sting behind them ; the idle words that fall from our reckless lips, and hurt our neighbors ; the words of prying curiosity, of selfish suspicion, of slimy defamation. How few dream of their responsibility in this ! We know the power of strychnine or arsenic, but not of a word. What undesigned phrases we drop in conversation, and forget as soon as passed, yet they are never forgotten ! What insignificant insects may have a fatal sting ! What have not even the best of us said in a moment of thoughtlessness, which we would give a fortune to recall, but it has been too late even for regrets or excuses ; and what scars, too, we still bear of wounds given by unthinking hands, which have made our whole life unhappy ! Words, I repeat, are not pulsations of

the air. Words are things. Alas ! how fearful is the thought, that in that day when the secrets of the hearts are revealed, so many blasted characters, so many tortured souls may stand up as witnesses of wrong, and the wanton whisper breathed in secret come back in echoes of thunder to pronounce us guilty of death ! It is the sin of us all. We all talk too much.

But I must end the catalogue of these sins, which the Christian morality calls false witness. I have touched only a few more weighty ones, but their name is legion ; and it will be enough, if these serve to enforce the principle. I have not feared to speak with honest plainness. If there be any who, while I set forth this vice, have thought how exactly I have drawn the portrait of another, I beg to remind them that they could not more directly break the law. Moral truth, like God, is no respecter of persons. It is the glass in which each sees his own reflection. Let this statute, then, speak to us, my friends, with its full meaning as it bears on the conduct of heart and lips. I sum it in one sentence of our apostle. "If any seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain." It might appear at first glance far too sweeping a rebuke. It concentrates in a word more than

a hundred discourses like this could do. We must not, indeed, infer from our common use of the phrase, that in the view of James an undisciplined tongue proves the utter absence of piety. Religion signifies here our outward worship of God. But if we soberly study it in that sense ; if we think how far that worship is the utterance of the affections, when it comes from unclean lips ; if we review these vices that have been seen to be sources of untold evil ; if we summon before us our own transgressions of the rule of Christ, the instances of unkindness, of hasty suspicion, of prejudice, our lack of candor, our readiness to believe a slander, our cowardice in allowing wrong, our unquenched fires of bitterness, our words of unholy wrath, we shall learn how much this duty has to do with the discipline of the whole heart. Such a discipline is hard indeed. We have some of us special temptations, an impetuous feeling, a harsh tone of judgment, a caustic wit, that lead us into ceaseless wrong in speech or act. But we have poorly learned our religion, if we do not feel that it is here we must apply the knife and the cautery. Let us not cheat ourselves with a vague talk of piety, but try it by this test of the New Testament. And thus I close with another saying of the apostle : " If any man offend not in

word, the same is a perfect man." This, too, may seem as strangely broad a sentence as the former one ; yet it only completes its truth. If by this rule we test our character ; if ours be this tongue void of offence, this chastened speech that springs from the chastened heart, it will bring us as near such perfection as our weak nature can with God's grace attain. It will give us a nobler than that smooth-tongued courtesy, which the polite world admires. We shall not fear to speak the truth with honesty, or to rebuke evil. But we shall so believe the truth, that we shall never mingle our personal passions with it ; we shall be content, if malice assail us, to stand in calm strength, as our Master stood before the judgment-seat, and say, " If I have done evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if well, why smitest thou me ;" we shall hold our own faith without calling all others unbelievers ; we shall turn away with noble scorn from any fraud, no matter if it take the name of church or party ; we shall count it our privilege to defend the weak, at the cost of our own good name. What watchfulness will it give us over ourselves ! what charity to others ! what meekness of wisdom to win men to truth, what caution in believing idle tales, what fear of injustice, what art like David's harp to calm the

demon of a Saul, what courtesy of heart and lips, what beauty of a Christian holiness ! I commend it to you, my brethren, as the law of our divine religion. I commend it to the church of Christ ; and if in this day of strifes we may dare hope it will ever learn the wise words, spoken by the wisest of its champions, Richard Hooker, that " Scripture was not writ to beget disputation, but charity, humility, moderation, of which virtues none did ever repent him on his death-bed," we may look forward to that which seems now a dream—the unity of the Spirit in the bond of truth.

## X.

## THE MORAL LAW OF WEALTH.

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.—EXOD. xx. 17.*

*Covetousness, which is idolatry.—COLOSS. iii. 5.*

WE reach to-day, Christian friends, the last of these laws, graven on the tables of the human conscience. I have sought, in our study of the early code, to show the heart of the Gospel glowing as through a rich transparency in every letter. But we have here its purest teaching. It might seem at first sight as if a command against covetousness had hardly a place in a code which deals with specific and outward wrongs. Law says, "thou shalt not steal;" but this says, "thou shalt not desire what is not thine own." Here then is the statute of equity, that perfects Hebrew justice; the moral truth, to which it points as its fountain and its aim.

In this light we may well study it at the outset as a principle of social duty. Covetousness, in its usual sense, is a vice we regard as confined to one passion of our human nature, the desire of wealth. But by this divine morality all the sins forbidden in these tables of the law, when we trace them back like the Nile from its seven mouths to its source, have their intrinsic guilt in this one desire. Murder, adultery, theft, false witness, are each the selfish violation of the right of another. The words of the commandment literally cover this view ; for they extend not only to our neighbor's house, but wife or anything that is his. Nor can I omit a striking proof of this thought in the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 19,) where the Apostle uses this word to illustrate the peculiar guilt of sensual sin. "To work all uncleanness with greediness," is in the original, "with covetousness." But there is a yet deeper thought in that sentence of St. Paul, which I have chosen as the gloss of the Hebrew statute ; "covetousness, which is idolatry." It may be, at first glance, obscure to any not familiar with his ethical ideas. Yet if the doctrine I have already given you in expounding the first Commandment be true, if a supreme love of wealth or sensual pleasure

be the same, whether we call ourselves Christians or bow down to the image of Plutus or Venus, then this selfish desire is in its spirit polytheism. Such was the social purpose of the law. Nor can I point to a nobler illustration than in those features of the Hebrew religion which enforce it on the national conscience, in the frequent command to open the hand wide to "thy poor;" in the touching provision of harvest-time, when the reapers must leave the ears for the gleaner; in the statute, so unexampled in that early day, which broke the fetters of the slave every seven years, and taught the people that their wealth was God's, and covetousness a sin against Him, because against humanity.

This interpretation opens at once a large field of thought. Our Lord, in his parable of the rich fool, gave us a definition of the moral law of wealth. "Beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." Wealth, in our degenerate use of the word, means this abundance of our acres or our bank stock; but in the good old Saxon it means well-being. Whatever adds to the real life of a man, to his knowledge or his virtues, increases his wealth. But such a



possession is by its very nature unselfish. Wisdom, refinement, the graces of the household and social life are not lessened by distribution, but our happiness is enlarged as we impart them.

For then, so much the more as one says Our,  
So much the more of good each one possesses,  
And more of charity in that cloister burns.

Covetousness, then, is the desire of that which is not wealth, but can only feed the selfish appetites. If this seem idle sentiment, it may perhaps be worth your thought to examine it a little more deeply. What is the value of money? It is for what it can buy. A bar of gold is worth nothing to the savage, whose simple barter is effected by a few shells; and nothing again to a hungry man in a desert place, who would gladly give it for a loaf of bread. Use is value. There were many foolish persons, who, when our gold mines were discovered, fancied that we had gained untold riches, and forgot that just in proportion as there was more gold in circulation than was needed for trade, it would be worth-less. Now this plain view conveys the very truth I enforce. The mere increase of property is not wealth. You wonder at the miser, who,

by the strange absurdity of human nature, grows into the love of money for its own sake, heaps up his coin, and starves himself. But carry the principle further. Covetousness has many more attractive shapes. A rich man purchases a fine painting or a costly library, but he has not the education to appreciate either; his money cannot buy him knowledge or taste; and thus he is really not half so much the owner of his estate as the poor artist, who enjoys the gems of his gallery or the landscape, that cannot be hedged in by his garden. This is the morality of Christ. Riches are not evil; but the love of money, the desire of it for any purpose save a real good is a root of all evil. Selfishness, pride, silly luxury, all these are the vices of the covetous spirit.

Such is the truth, then, which we apply to social growth. The moral laws of society are precisely the same as for the personal man, although we forget it in our folly. It is an age when commerce has taken the place of churchly or feudal society; and all our ideas of class, of education are shaped by its influence. The religion of Christ does not look with hostility or fear on our modern world. There are some who call it an age of material progress, and turn back

with a lament to the past "ages of faith," when the priesthood took charge of the conscience, and the noble of the state. But this advance in wealth means also the advance of knowledge, of civil and religious freedom, of industry and benevolence ; and we believe, therefore, in a Gospel that enters cheerfully into the practical questions of our time. Yet we say to the teachers of social science that they too must remember the laws of Christian ethics, which alone can guide this progress. The "wealth of nations" means to many, since the day of Adam Smith, the products of soil and trade ; but it must consist for the nation, as for the man, in the growth of integrity, purity, and holiness. In this light we meet the problem that disturbs so many minds, as they look at the evils of modern civilization, its crime and beggary, the discords of capital and labor, the severed interests of class, all that looms in such colossal shadow on our horizon. There must be, as we press onward from the simpler stage and open new sources of knowledge, new wants unknown in former days. A glass window or a carpet would have seemed artificial to a noble of a few hundred years ago. Our commerce brings to our doors the farthest zones, and our wealth feeds

the arts that minister to the beauty and comfort of life. All these are sources of good, so long as they represent a real growth. If a higher education give tone to this practical activity ; if a pure Christian training, above all, teach us to prize wealth for noble ends, there will be social health. But such gains are slow. Institutions of sound learning or religion, laws, national habits need the ripening of years. You may build your modern temple of corrugated iron in a few weeks, but a cedar of Lebanon or a Westminster Abbey must grow. If these influences be wanting, there is nothing to check the materialism of wealth, and thus by sure steps the greed of gain debases not only commerce, but the whole character of society. Art is made the pander of a refined sensuality. Nor is the effect of this false luxury confined to the rich. There is no greater falsehood than the notion that private vices can be public benefits. Wealth is only a good to the poor when it quickens honest industry, soberness, self-respect, and Christian habits ; but this false condition turns them into serfs, dependent on the rich instead of their honorable labor ; it breeds envy and the aping of the self-same vices ; until at last, when growing capital has absorbed all into its power, the barriers of

class are widened, and the life of the whole body is in danger. Such is the result of social covetousness, when it has seized upon the heart of a people.

This then, is the law which I wish to study in the character of our own time and land. I do not speak as a sceptic in regard to our American life, but rather with the earnest feeling of one who believes so heartily in the principles of a republic, that he is the more anxious to see their reality. Our country has the elements of a grand civilization. It is a virgin soil where all things, commerce, social institutions, start without forcing and reach a sudden bloom. The absence of titled classes, of State interference, of the myriad forms of law which fetter personal freedom in the older world, give room for the fullest development of our powers. I rejoice in the blessing of such freedom. Nor are we to expect that the character of a young people should be without the natural faults of youth. But we must know their faults, and not pamper them as fond parents spoil their children. There is a brilliancy in such a civilization, that too often dazzles us into blindness, and leads us to forget that in proportion as we are capable of swift results, we may be incapable of ripeness.

in more solid virtues. The covetousness of sudden wealth is the special danger in a land, where the readiest path to rank is by the gain of a fortune. We are not liable indeed in these days to the mistaken charge, once made against our national character, of a mercenary love of the dollar. Avarice is the vice of the old man and the old people. None are more generous or more wasteful than we; yet if the vice be of a more splendid sort, it is none the less the "accursed hunger of gold," that poisons our best virtues.

Let me turn to it, first of all, as it touches the habits of business. That proverb of the wise man "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent," has a deep truth for the economist as well as the Christian. I have already in a former sermon spoken of the dishonesty, that has grown in the whirl of trade. But I look now at a deeper distemper, not so easily seen as in such cases. Were it only a physical evil, it would be deplorable enough, for it is fast turning us into a race of nervous men, inferior to the stalwart Englishmen from whom we sprang. But this is trivial, compared with the moral influence. It is this, that leads us into the mad speculation, so marked a feature of the time. Sudden wealth

is the dream that fevers the social imagination. Men hear of millions made in a day, of the fabulous rise of stocks by one turn at the broker's board, of nuggets of gold rewarding the miner in an hour's digging, and to their dazzled minds the old modes of labor are tame indeed. What doubt of the result? The tide of business sweeps away our moral barriers, as the Mississippi tears the crumbling banks and bears them along its swollen waters. There is a loss by sure steps of the habits of solid industry or happiness. What repose to mind or heart is there for the merchant who breathes only the heated air of traffic, or the gold gambler who goes to his night exchange? What leisure has the tired clerk for a book, or any pure recreation? What wonder that he loses the bloom of a Christian youth, spends his Sunday in a gay drive, and his night in stimulating the worn brain with fiery poisons? Indeed, I do not hesitate to say, that the chief cause of the intemperance so common amongst us is this intemperate business life; the waste of nervous power that creates a craving for some strong supply. I feel that this is a topic of pressing weight. We have our periodic fits of philanthropy in the cause of abstinence; yet we do little to pre-

vent this worse intoxication, which eats out the fibre of body and soul. It is a sin many think not of. And is a man less a sot who steeps himself in bargains, than he who steeps himself in spirituous liquors? Pass a prohibitory law to purify these habits of the business world, and you will find it more effective than our temperance societies. None can defy with impunity the laws of body and mind. I might name other forms in which this covetous spirit of trade shows itself. I regard the tendency of commerce to foster the despotism of capital in the hands of the few as a sore evil. We boast that feudal slavery is gone; yet our modern system can create as abject a dependence of the poorer classes, without even the social tie that softened in some degree the hardships of the serf. There may be less danger in a country where wealth changes hands more readily; but it is vain to ignore so threatening an evil. We cannot alter the natural law of trade; but it is full time for our political economists to learn, that unless there be some principle beside a grasping self-interest, unless that law of co-operative labor, which is alike the aim of social science and Christianity, can be made practical, our progress is a dream.



But I must pass to a further view of this covetous spirit. It is the parent of many social vices. I do not suppose that we are the only people who love money. Nor do I regard as worthier of honor the worship of noble blood or privileged order, which so many abroad prefer to our republican equality. But we may well remember that refinement, gentle manners, and yet more, the graces of Christian life are a true nobility ; and if our growth in wealth do not give these, there is nothing so base as the character it creates. Our virtue does not indeed consist in a bare simplicity. We owe it to society to spend our riches on the education of the taste as well as on useful art or charity. But this education is not of fast growth. We may build our marble mansions, but it is another thing to fill them with a refined circle ; we may purchase gilded frames, but it is another thing to enjoy the rare gem of a master ; we may import the luxuries of foreign lands, the laces of France and the wines of Germany, but not so often the culture that lifts the gentleman here or abroad above the vulgarity of wealth. There are indeed many who know the use of riches, in whose homes we may find the fairest growth of mind and heart. But we have seen far too swift an increase of this sordid ambi-

tion. Inflation, that happy word we have invented to cover the nakedness of trade, expresses the social distemper also. What leaders in our fashionable world, who have no claim to either good breeding or Christian virtue ! what silly rivalries ! what idolatry of money ! What is the picture we might draw from many a house, alas ! not a home ; its master, toiling like a slave, sul-  
len, feverish, desperate, seeing each month the grim ghost of the future, but hiding it from his family, returning at night to a dwelling without solace, where his wife and children sit in the array of silks and gilded furniture, dreaming that finery is social position, and careless that they are draining the husband's life-blood for their folly ! Would I might sound this truth in the ears of many a shrewd tradesman, who in the maelstrom of our life has lost the simplest wisdom ! I would ask him, if there be any stranger want of sagacity than his, who can reckon all the chances of an investment in grain or teas, yet cannot see the madness of spending his years without comfort, to leave his fortune at last to children whom he has taught only to make it a curse ? It is a thought perhaps worth pondering by a wise man of business. The best wealth for your son is the knowledge that he is meant to labor, and that not

to do it is dishonor. The best dowry for your daughter is that of the unselfish affections. If you have such a home, a Christian home, where, after the toil of the day, you can throw off the fever of trade, and have an evening of "sacred and home-felt delight," where your children grow in pure knowledge, and tastes beyond the masquerade of fashion, I call you a rich man. But this covetousness is by no means confined to the upper rank of the social world. The faults of the rich descend to those beneath them ; and above all, in a land like ours, where there is the strong ambition to rise in the world. Far be from me the morality which consecrates caste, or shuts down talent on the plea of a Christian humility in our calling ! I honor the intelligence, which may lift the artisan to the highest place ; and I love better his independence of feeling than the servility we often find in the same class abroad. But I cannot confound this with envy of the rich man's equipage and idleness. We have too many ready enough to grasp at higher wages, and demand exemption from labor, who will not stoop to the thorough work of a craftsman. The son of the farmer must delve in the quicker soil of trade ; the young girl scorns house-work, and will drudge in the factory for a few

dollars more to spend on dress ; the mechanic will throw away his money on tawdry furniture ; and the servant on cotton lace or mock jewelry. It may be said that this is the excess of a noble freedom ; but let us never pamper a morbid discontent, and a poor imitation of social vices.

Nor must I pass by the same truth, as it bears on the tone of our education. We justly boast that we have beyond other lands the blessing of schools for the people ; and we are growing doubtless as fast and as far, as can be looked for in a young nation. It is not to be expected that our busy life should leave leisure for the ripest fruits of the scholar. But we are not to forget our special danger here. The worship of wealth reduces everything to its money value ; and this is what many mean by the practical and the useful. There is too little demand for the knowledge that goes beyond the driving habit of the day ; newspaper, popular lecture, sensational volumes are our education. This spirit debases the noblest callings. Our men of modest learning have the inferior place ; our best professional talent is tempted to prostitute itself to mercenary aims. There are too few among us, content to say, as Agassiz did in his scholarlike simplicity, "I have

no time to make money." The professor will leave his chair for some paying office, or have his speculation in an oil well or a railroad stock. I doubt not this is the cause that the pulpit has grown so sensational ; it has its market price like all other commodities. Do I exaggerate here ? I wish it were so. We are reaching, I believe, a better stage of our education in literature and science ; but we need to learn betimes that a shallow smartness, a falsely-called practical knowledge is not to be flattered. We are ever aiming at hasty and showy results ; we have not the patience, the thought, the reverent affection for those institutions that abide, because they are intertwined with the roots of all living growth. We "pull down our barns to build greater, where we may bestow our goods ;" we rear a marble pile that tumbles to-morrow ; we sell the tombs of our fathers to get money for a grander church ; we tear away and build again ; we have no more reverence for a noble landmark of the past than for the venerable tree, the growth of a century, which must be hacked to pieces if it come in the way of a new thoroughfare for our traffic. Call this sentiment if you please ; I call it a weighty fact. I believe as much as any in ideas of progress ; but no peo-

ple has ever gained a lasting life, unless planted in that respect of learning, of settled law, of social and Christian training, which can outgrow such unripe follies.

And thus our study of this social vice widens to a survey of our national character. I do not wish to bring into the pulpit the much dreaded subject of politics. But I will only remind you of the truth, which a Christian statesman should know, if he look deeper than the shallow trickeries of the demagogue, that political life has its roots in morality; and above all so where the government is of the people, and the national councils reflect the average virtue or vice of the people. In this view, therefore, I do not fear to say, that the question at this hour, which underlies all those of finance or public affairs, is a moral one. Covetousness is our danger. We are a young race, with the activity, the courage, and the insolence of youth. We count the millions of our exports and imports; we reckon our greatness by the sails whitening the farthest seas, the swarming emigration, the new-found gold mines, and the cargoes of foreign luxuries for which we give the solid bullion of our earlier simplicity. But we have yet to learn that this pros-

perity cannot last, if a mercenary spirit poison the social heart. We have had already fearful lessons, but we do not heed them. It was no merely political discord, but the covetousness of men who loved gain more than national honor, that debased us until we drifted into civil war; and when we came out from that sea of blood, we hoped awhile that a generous love of country had purified us. But the greed of wealth has entered anew into the public heart. I remember that, in rambling a year ago in the old church-yard of San Miniato, I came on a monument with this inscription: "In memory of Signor —, who was treasurer of Florence thirty years, and who died poor." That epitaph would be a strange novelty here. But it is of no common examples that I speak. We may well tremble, as we review the proofs within these few years of the unblushing sins that have disgraced our congress, the hucksters, high and low, who have made merchandise of our national honor.

And are these things outside the thought or the stern rebuke of a Christian pulpit? No, my friends, our morality and our religion are a dream, if they cannot reach them. You may make a political machine as perfect as the wit of statesmen can devise; you may boast of a

republic that blends all the ideas of freedom, intelligence, and self-governed order ; you may prate of ballot-box and civil rights ; yet if the constitution do not rest on the purity of the national conscience, if it can breed a growing swarm each year to fester and fatten on the body, it is as worthless as a musty parchment to preserve the national life. Republics are the noblest ideal of civilization. But there is no inherent power in any civilization to save us from the result of our good or evil. What is the history of the world to him who reads with Christian eyes, but the record of this statute, " thou shalt not covet," from the empire of the Cæsars, broken by its own weight, to the last universal monarch, whom Europe sent to fret away his majestic vanity on the rock of St. Helena ? The verdict of mankind reverses the venal flatteries of the hour. The story of Ahab and Jezebel, who coveted Naboth's field, is the type of many a famous nation. Spain, enslaving the South American Indian, and grasping at her mines of silver, sank to deserved obscurity. England, forcing the opium of India on the Chinese by unjust war, has in the eye of history the glory of a street-bully. God grant that this star, risen so brightly in our



western skies, prove not the meteor of the Apocalypse, "whose name was Wormwood, that fell from heaven, burning as a lamp, and fell on the rivers, and the fountains of waters became wormwood, and many died of the waters because they were made bitter." Such is the wise lesson of the time. Let the politician laugh at it as a poor legend, but he may find in these forgotten books of Moses the maxims of a nobler statesmanship. "Up, sanctify the people; for thus saith the Lord God, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until thou take away the accursed thing. And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the Babylonish garments, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and daughters, his oxen and asses, his sheep and tent, and all that he had; and they brought them into the valley of Achor. And Joshua said: Why hast thou troubled Israel? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones and burned them with fire." This was a statesman of old time, unread in public economies, but taught in the first principles of public honor; and would God his spirit ruled to-day, to stone with stones and burn with fire

the Achans in our high places, who have defiled us with the accursed thing. God of our fathers ! is it in vain that this new world was planted by a race that feared Thy name, and laid the cornerstone of the republic in faith and honor ? are all the hopes of the good, who have turned to this land as the home of a Christian liberty, to prove a dream ? I do not say it in despair. I believe in the future. I believe in that Providence, who guides history, and will teach us through sore experience our real dangers. But I believe in no rhetoric about our glorious destiny or our immortal constitution. I read only this truth in the whole past, that the laws of justice, honesty, and holiness are one for man or nation ; and nations live or die as they keep or scorn them. This is the truth to be enforced on the public conscience ; and if we learn it, we shall be a wise and understanding people.

I close here, brethren and friends, these commentaries on the law of God. We have travelled over a wide field of duties that concern us as men, as neighbors, as citizens of the state, and of the greater commonwealth of Christ. I have sought to read the Hebrew text in the full light of a Gospel, "quick, powerful, sharper than a

two-edged sword, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." I have hid none of its obligations and smoothed none of its rigors. If it have seemed sometimes too stern for the voice of our religion, I can only repeat that in a time which loves a Christianity of opinion more than duty, of license more than the law of liberty, or on another side a Jewish ceremonial more than its moral truth, we need to know above all the unity of faith with a real holiness. If we have thus studied the ancient code of Israel, even these imperfect thoughts will not be in vain. We shall learn here the unchanging morality of Christ, which must rebuke the sins, not of Pharisees and Sadducees long ago gone to their dust, but of our own hearts, of the church and the social world in our own time. These "words of God" shall thus abide forever. They speak in the conscience of mankind ; they are repeated in history, with all their warnings and all their promises, as when they rose from the five tribes of Gerizim and were hurled back by the answering tribes from Ebal ; curses for the transgressor, blessings for all that obey ; blessings in basket and store, in thy house and thy field, in the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and in the land which the Lord sware to thy fathers to give thee.

